

New Perspectives on Healing, Restoration and Reconciliation in John's Gospel

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New Perspectives on Healing, Restoration and Reconciliation in John's Gospel

By

Jacobus (Kobus) Kok



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This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

Dedicated to

*Jan G. van der Watt
My academic father and beloved mentor
who turns 65 in 2017*



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Acknowledgements

This is a translated and revised version of a doctoral thesis presented to the University of Pretoria (2005–2008) in South Africa. The University of Pretoria requires that doctoral research results should be published in journals and book chapters. From my doctoral thesis several articles and one book chapter were published after submission of the thesis (during 2009–2012). With the kind (written) permission of the journals and one book publisher, some sections appear in this book in a *revised* form:

Kok, J., 2009, 'Die Opstanding van Jesus as Kulminerende Genesingshandelinge in Johannes' [The resurrection of Jesus as culminating healing act in John], *Verbum et Ecclesia* 30 (1), 112–147.

Kok, J., 2010, 'As the Father has sent me, I send you: Towards a missional-incarnational ethos in John 4' in R. Zimmermann & J.G. Van der Watt (eds.), *Moral Language in the New Testament*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, pp. 168–193 (confer cum pp. 252ff in this book for Kok and Niemandt 2009).

Kok, J., 2011, 'The Birth of the Post Resurrection Missional Church in John', *Neotestamentica* (43) 1, 1–15.

Kok, J., 2012, 'The Healing of the Blind Man in John', *Journal of Early Christian History*, Vol 2.2012, pp. 36–62.

In 2005 I began with this book, as part of the requirements for a PhD in New Testament Studies at the University of Pretoria which I completed in 2008 while I was a fulltime minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. Originally it was published in Afrikaans. In 2009 I was appointed as Senior Lecturer in New Testament Studies at the University of Pretoria and in 2012 promoted to Associate Professor and with that received some student assistant help for two hours per week. Over the years (2009–2013) several of my assistants¹ and students translated the book into English. It took a very long time. The process speeded up when Professors Tobias Nicklas, John Kloppenborg and Paul Decock did an audit of our faculty in 2011. They urged the University to supply funds so that the book could be translated

¹ At the University of Pretoria Dr. Hanré Janse Van Rensburg, Dr. Llewellyn Howes and Rev. Arend Hattingh assisted me in this project over the years (translation and proof reading).

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In 2007, I was granted a Deutsche Akademische Austausch Dienst doctoral bursary to do research at the University of Bonn in Germany under the guidance of Prof. Michael Wolter. This exposure to German scholarship was a life-changing experience. I thank the D.A.A.D for this wonderful opportunity and for Michael Wolter for a life-long friendship that developed in the process.

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I also dedicate this book to Martelize, Joshua and Heinrich. Martelize, you know the price we have paid over the years. Thank you. Together we have also experienced the presence of the Life-giving God who restores and heals in His time and the grace and gift of life which I hope you will enjoy in the fullest sense of the word. Remember the words of Irenaeus, my sons: "The Glory of God is man *fully alive*." This life I believe is to be found in Him who is the source of our being (John 1:4; 10:10).

Introductory Preface

Much has been written on the healing narratives in John. However, one does not find a substantial amount of literature on John that combines traditional exegetical approaches and social-scientific approaches in a balanced way. Most modern European-American approaches to healing narratives, for instance supernaturalism on the one hand, versus naturalism on the other, lead to an *impasse*. Alternative scholarship models derived from a social-scientific approach, open up fresh perspectives and call for a paradigm shift from/towards a social-scientific perspective, which is often underappreciated in traditional exegetical studies of the healing narratives in John's Gospel.

Elness-Hanson (2016: *ad loc*) correctly observes: "Even though the demographics of World Christianity demonstrate a population shift to the Global South, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, the preponderance of biblical scholarship continues to be dominated by Western scholars in pursuit of their contextual questions that are influenced by an Enlightenment-oriented worldview".

Having some knowledge of traditional group oriented communities and their focus on 'healing', for instance in Africa, it led me to consider whether there might be another way to determine how the ancient healing narratives in John could have functioned in the understanding of who the (remembered) Jesus of history was, what he did and what meaning the ancient readers developed/constructed about him.

By use of the methods and models of social-scientific criticism in combination with traditional historical-critical and literary-critical methods, new insights might be gained. In this study the insights of social-scientific approaches, developed by scholars like John Pilch and others like Neyrey, Malina and Rohrbaugh are utilised to open up fresh perspectives on the healing narratives in John.

In the final year of my B.Th. degree (2001) with Prof. Jan G. van der Watt at the University of Pretoria, and some modules my father (Dr. G.J. Kok) presented in 2003 in our M.Div. course, the book of John Pilch (2000), *Healing in the New Testament*, was inter alia prescribed. Pilch opened up fresh perspectives for interpreting the healing narratives in John. Pilch makes the helpful distinction between the *curing of a disease* and *the healing of an illness*. 'Sickness' is used as an umbrella term within medical anthropology to refer to or express a person's experience of, both 'disease' and 'illness'. In Africa, with some of the highest occurrences of people with HIV and AIDS in the world, this distinction has made us sensitive to the fact that there might not be a cure for the disease, but there might be a 'healing for the illness'. The healing of an illness

represents much more than the mere biological curing of a disease—for it includes the whole socio-cultural and religious dimensions of life that get disrupted when an illness comes over a person. Illness is in other words much more than a mere biological disease. For an African for instance, a disease leads to ‘sickness’—which is understood as an umbrella term that includes both disease and illness (following Pilch 2000; see also pp. 17–21 in this book for clarification of the terms).²

An illness influences all dimensions of life, like family, religion and relations with the spiritual world. From such a perspective distorted and disharmonious relations could in other words from such a perspective, be understood as a ‘sickness’ or a form of ‘brokenness’ which is in need of ‘healing’ or ‘restoration’. Let me give one example. Many (traditional) Africans believe that a ‘disease’ could be of spiritual origin. In other words, when someone becomes ill, he or she might have done something that could have upset the ancestors in the spiritual world. The physical disease might be the result of a broken relationship between people. Wilkens (2011:37) in her study on healing in Africa observes:

Healing is often connected to ancestors . . . In these cases, illness is often thought to be caused by individuals or whole communities forgetting to honour their ancestors or breaking certain rules of community life. Healing then consists of rituals of reconciliation both among the members of the community and with the ancestors through sacrifice . . .

WILKENS 2011:37

Some years ago we have seen this train of thought in June 2013 when the former South African president, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, was critically ill with a lung infection in a hospital in Pretoria, South Africa. A grandson of former President Mandela, who succeeded him as chief, apparently had the remains of some Mandela family members removed from the traditional burial ground in Qunu, and had them reburied at his own village in Mvezo. The elders of the Mandela family immediately reacted and said that President Mandela would not get well (be healed from his disease) if the remains of the ancestors were not returned.³ A rigorous court case followed and former President

2 Compare Turner, Blodget, Kahona, Benwa (1992).

3 In a newspaper article in the Sowetan (1 July 2013), the following reports appeared: “Meanwhile, the Sunday Times reported that elders from the Mandela family and local chiefs believed the former president’s prolonged ill health could be attributed to the ancestors being angry with Mandla Mandela’s actions relating to the reburials. The elders reportedly feared that the ancestors could have “cursed” the Mandela family. ‘Mandela’s soul is not at peace.

Mandela's grandson had to return the remains of the ancestors to the original burial ground. Suddenly, and ironically—according to newspapers, President Mandela's health improved. In many newspapers the claim was made that the health of Mandela improved because the ancestors had been appeased. For these people, the biological disease of a person is linked to the spiritual dimension and to the health of the community as a whole. In other words, when group oriented people think about 'healing', they do not only think about it as a mere curing of a physical disease. Physical disease is related to un-wellness elsewhere, and *vice versa*. Therefore, dyadic or group oriented people could often speak of the people or nation that will be 'healed' or 'restored' (with God/spiritual world) if they do the 'right' things (cf. 2 Chr 7:14; Is 53; cf. also Ja 5:16).⁴ The opposite is in other words also true—a people or nation could be critically 'ill' and in a state of 'brokenness' or 'un-wellness' or 'sickness' because of inappropriate conduct or broken relationships. For these people, a cause and effect relationship exists between disease and illness. When they do experience some problems, it is often believed that something went wrong on another level in such an holistic worldview. This relates to the nature of an integrated worldview, in which the Western dichotomy between spiritual and physical, disease and illness is not upheld, but rather integrated into an holistic worldview according to which everything, the spiritual and the physical, are intimately integrated and interconnected (See Wilkens 2011).

To a large degree the ancient Mediterranean people had a similar way of making sense of the world. The spiritual and the physical worlds were observed as being closely related to one another. Bad things in the spiritual world, or sins committed to or in the group, could lead to physical disease or some form of brokenness for which 'healing' was needed (cf. Ja 5:16). Take for instance John 9:1 where the disciples asked Jesus "Who sinned—that caused this man to be born blind?" (Jn 9:2... τίς ἥμαρτεν, οὗτος ἢ οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, ἵνα τυφλὸς γεννηθῇ). For the disciples of Jesus there was a direct relationship between the disease of the man and some spiritual brokenness—or some evil sin that must have taken place at some stage. Like (some) traditional Africans of today, the ancient people did not see illness as something related to physical disease only. Physical disease could also be the result or manifestation of the 'un-wellness' of the group, or of the social-cultural and religious disharmony and brokenness

The ancestors will only be appeased once the remains of the Mandela family are reburied in Qunu. Only then will Tata be released, one of the chiefs told the newspaper." (source: <<http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2013/07/01/mandla-mandela-will-challenge-court-decision>>, accessed on 1 July 2013).

4 See Dow (1986:56–69) on 'universal aspects of symbolic healing'.

in their midst. ‘Healing’ for them would in other words be understood much more broadly than the mere ‘curing of a disease’. For them, ‘healing’ would also entail ‘restoration’—for instance the restoration or healing of broken and damaged relationships—which is often related to forgiveness and reconciliation (cf. the Zulu terms *Ngithethelele isono* [forgiveness of sins]; *Ngiphilise izwe labo* [heal their land]).

My African (Sotho tribe) colleague Dr. Elijah Mahlangu (2016: *ad loc*) recently pointed out the following:

Modern Western medicine has proven to be effective as far as explaining the physical causes of sickness and in putting into action curative processes. Western medicine has not been able to detect and rectify its weaknesses in traditional African context. In Africa, health does not only mean a healthy body and mind. Disease is not just a physical or mental issue but it is a religious matter. The Sesotho word for sickness is *lefu*. This is significant because the same word is used for death. When sickness occurs, it means there is imbalance between the metaphysical and the human world.

Naturally this also relates to semantic domains like forgiveness and conversion (cf. 2 Chr 7:14). Healing would also entail restoration of and integration with the group and restoration with the spiritual world. In fact, in some instances, the curing of a disease could only take place after other wrongs have been put right (cf. Ja 5:16). On the other side of the coin, we also see that ‘disease’ might lead to ‘illness’—a person who is physically ill could be marginalised because he or she might have done something wrong. One example is that in Africa, we often see that the group would marginalise a person who suffers from AIDS. Such a person suffers not only from a disease—he or she also suffers from an ‘illness’. That is, they are shunted out of the group or become despised objects and are labelled negatively. Often the implicit discourse held by the group is that the person is in such a state because it is perceived that he or she has done something wrong and that the ancestors are consequently punishing him or her. The same is true of the social dynamics in John’s Gospel. In John, the disciples also link the blindness of the blind man in John 9 to sin. That is why they wanted to know what he or someone else has done wrong that resulted in him being born blind (cf. Jn 9:2)?

Another form of ‘brokenness’ and ‘sickness’ is the social exclusion of people from the group. Such an example can be found in John 4:1–42. The Samaritan woman is ‘healed’ and ‘restored’ on some level after her transformational interaction with Jesus. Although the text does not state that explicitly, I will argue that group oriented people reading the text, would have made such connections.

To reiterate, when comparing some (traditional) African contexts and the ancient Mediterranean context(s), one has to acknowledge that neither thinks/ thought about ‘disease/illness/sickness’ in the same way most Westerners do today. Once we are open to the possibility that ancient people could have interpreted sickness or illness more broadly than we do, new insights open up when we read the healing or restoration narratives in John. During this process we realise that perhaps we should consider a paradigm shift when it comes to interpreting the meaning of the healing narratives in John, with the help of such social-scientific approaches.

Background and Critical Reflection

In 2007 I was fortunate to be granted a D.A.A.D bursary, to do a part of this study under the guidance of Prof. Michael Wolter at the University of Bonn. Wolter challenged me to engage with German scholarship and to combine traditional German exegetical approaches with the (American) social-scientific approaches. We met every Friday in his office (nicknamed the ‘Rote Salon’ [Red Saloon]) in the Evangelisch Theologische Fakultät in Bonn for a discussion on my work. Prof. Jörg Frey, who at that time was still in Munich, also provided a helpful *critique*. Frey introduced me to the important work of Salier. Frey embodied German precision and rigorous *critique*, and often illustrated the weaker points of utilising broad social scientific methodologies with specific reference to the fact that they could be very reductionist in nature. This he based on his in-depth knowledge of the plurality and diversity of primary Jewish sources in the time period surrounding the writing of John’s Gospel. Only in later years, after becoming a fulltime academic myself and after reading the ancient Jewish texts more intensely, did I start more fully to appreciate what he meant and why he was uncomfortable with the social-scientific approaches I used. One specific problem is the plurality of Jewish perspectives on disease and how this related to temple oriented Judaism—to exclusion on religious and social levels, etc. This relation is not readily identifiable, especially in a context after the fall of the temple in 70 CE. It is also not so easy to say how the readers of John, in the context of the Jewish Diaspora and in places like Ephesus or Asia Minor as a possible contexts, would have treated people with illness such as blindness, etc.⁵ Furthermore, ancient texts, often

5 Prof. Joel Baden from Yale once pointed this out me at a Disability in Antiquity session at the International SBL session in Amsterdam in 2012 after I had presented a paper on Jesus healing the blind man in John. His concern was that New Testament scholars use the

written by the educated 'elite', are not always a reflection of what happened on 'ground level'. If I had known then what I know now I would probably have approached the study in a slightly different way. For this reason I am critical about my own book, due to my exposure to different perspectives in the years as a fulltime academic at a university and having been exposed to more information. Any scholar makes use of certain approaches and models. No model or approach is without its problems. It is also important to be open to, and honest about the strong and weak points of one's own approach. One critique of my work could be that I have used selective social-scientific models to try and make sense of the possible way *temple oriented Jews* might have thought about people with illness. The problem/challenge is that John was written at a time long after the destruction of the temple. The contextual world of John is to be found somewhere else, in a completely different time and place, while the referential world is that of the early 30's of the first century in Jerusalem and surrounding places in Galilee, etc. In spite of this (self)critique, it is still very interesting to see how this particular *reading scenario*, through the heuristic lens of the social-scientific models I have used, and which interprets the understanding of the healing narratives against the background of a possible (referential) temple oriented worldview, opens up new ways of reading John as a *Jewish text*. Some scholars argue that the early Christ-followers were not yet 'Christians' in the strict sense of the word (Lieu 2004:1). In the first century, the Christ-movement was a sect within the Jewish movement. In my view John was most probably, *inter alia*, written by a Christ-following Jew or a community of Jews (related to the beloved disciple),⁶ intended also for Jews and others, seeking to give answers to *Jewish questions*.⁷ Naturally this deals with questions related to identity and boundary markers and with the relation of the emerging

Old Testament in their arguments, but do not always differentiate diachronically how the Jews saw such matters in the different historical phases of their history. Using P-sources to make a point is sometimes not correct when trying to explain the socio-religious dynamics in the first century CE, for instance. According to him, Mary Douglas' model of concentric circles and maps of persons, places and times might not have been the way the first century Jews saw the matter, not to mention the plurality of 'Jewish' (Temple oriented versus Diaspora/Hellenistic Judaism, Rabbinic, etc.) ways of approaching the matter.

6 Compare the perspectives of Reinhartz (2001).

7 Most scholars are of the opinion that John's Gospel went through several stages of development and that the present version might be a fourth or fifth edition (see Powell 2009:173).

‘Christian’⁸ movement to more established Jewish movements of the day. In the first century, Judaism also was not a monolithic entity, but diverse in nature. Similarly ‘Christianity’ was not monolithic. There were many different expressions of ‘Christianity’. The author of John’s Gospel goes to great lengths to create a picture of Jesus against the background/relief of temple oriented Judaism and its symbolic world (cf. Jn 9:7) (See Anderson 2011: *ad loc*).

One of the important points the author(s) of John wants to make is that he wants to present Jesus in such a way that those who read this Gospel in their particular contextual world, gets a picture of the ‘Jesus of history’ which gives them practical answers to identity questions they might have had in their own context. Thus, John’s ‘remembered’ Jesus is a ‘(re)presented’ Jesus, a reinterpretation of the meaning of Jesus’ life and work for a particular context many decades after the death (and resurrection) of Jesus and after the destruction of the temple. This is the beauty and charm of John. The author(s) created an artistic theological masterpiece related to the tradition of the Jesus of history, with the purpose that people who would read it many decades afterwards, might come to believe that this Jesus was/is truly the Son of God (Jn 20:30–31). Narratives are vehicles that carry implicit values. John wanted people to come to believe that Jesus is the source of life, the Son of God. One way he tried to do just that was to guide people to understand the impact of the life-giving healing narratives of Jesus. These then represented not only *how* or *that* Jesus cured the diseases of some people, but also in which way he could be seen as the embodiment of true life (Jn 1:4; 10:10) and be recognised as God’s sent agent who brought the gift of restoration and reconciliation to people (3:16) who were in a distorted and broken relationship with God (cf. Jn 20:21). This innovative message of John went against the established institutional values of the day. From the *margins of society* and institutionalized religious structures of the day, Jesus healed *those on the margins*, illustrating that God’s presence is to be found at that very place—on the margins—those unexpected ‘unholy’ places where one would not normally expect the presence of God. In this way John’s Jesus illustrated the “heart of God’s desires for the world” in a series of “sustained engagements with Jerusalem authorities” (Anderson 2011: *ad loc* 211).

In sum, the social-scientific models I utilized to interpret the healing narratives do provide fresh perspectives. However, there are some limitations to my

8 I agree with some like Lieu (2004:1) and Nicklas (2014) that it is anachronistic to speak of ‘the’ Christians in the first century, since it originated as a Jewish movement and only much later did the Christ-followers start to see and describe themselves as a religion apart from Judaism.

approach as well, as there will be in/with any book. Each model and approach has its own weaknesses and strengths.

It is my wish that this book will carry some significance for you as reader and that you might find new ways of thinking about healing, restoration and reconciliation in John's Gospel that goes beyond the *impasse* of a traditional Western way of approaching the healing narratives in the past. As Christianity moves to the Global South, the significance of this approach will become clearer.

Jacobus (Kobus) Kok
Pretoria, South Africa
Leuven, Belgium, May 2016

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Abbreviations

Old Testament

Gn	Genesis
Ex	Exodus
Lv	Leviticus
Nm	Numbers
Dt	Deuteronomy
Jos	Joshua
Jdg	Judges
Rt	Ruth
1 Sm	1 Samuel
2 Sm	2 Samuel
1 Ki	1 Kings
2 Ki	2 Kings
1 Chr	1 Chronicles
2 Chr	2 Chronicles
Ezr	Ezra
Neh	Nehemiah
Es	Esther
Job	Job
Ps	Psalms
Pr	Proverbs
Ec	Ecclesiastes
ss	Song of Songs
Is	Isaiah
Jr	Jeremiah
Lm	Lamentation
Ezk	Ezekiel
Dn	Daniel
Hs	Hosea
Jl	Joel
Am	Amos
Ob	Obadiah
Jnh	Jonah
Mi	Micah
Nah	Nahum
Hab	Habakkuk
Zph	Zephaniah
Hg	Haggai
Zch	Zechariah
Ml	Malachi

New Testament

Mt	Matthew
Mk	Mark
Lk	Luke
Jn	John
Ac	Acts
Rm	Romans
1 Cor	1 Corinthians
2 Cor	2 Corinthians
Gl	Galatians
Eph	Ephesians
Phlp	Philippians
Col	Colossians
1 Th	1 Thessalonians
2 Th	2 Thessalonians
1 Tm	1 Timothy
2 Tm	2 Timothy
Tt	Titus
Phlm	Philemon
Heb	Hebrews
Ja	James
1 Pt	1 Peter
2 Pt	2 Peter
1 Jn	1 John
2 Jn	2 John
3 Jn	3 John
Jude	Jude
Rv	Revelation

Introduction: Frame of Reference and Problem Statement

1 Introduction

Every researcher lives in a specific historical context, and therefore has a specific worldview or frame of reference, which naturally/automatically affects the researcher's identification of the research gap he/she focuses on and his/her ability to address it. It is for this reason that it is so important for the researcher to be able to identify and expound his/her (1) worldview, (2) frame of reference, and (3) the historical context in which he/she is living. Without this very important first step, the effective and successful identification and extrapolation of a research gap (or problem statement) would not be possible. This first step is not only important for the researcher's own clarity—it is also through this process of identification and explanation that the future reader is also assisted in understanding the researcher's problem statement and hypothesis.

1.2 Frame of Reference/Worldview

1.2.1 *Our New World—A Global Village*

Although every era in history can (and does) claim to have been a time of significant change and transformation, there are those that say that the world (and therefore also the church in the world) is at this moment going through such a radical change that it will forever affect the way we think about ourselves, our world, the church, and God (see for e.g. Burger 1995:13). According to Vertovec (2007:1024–1054), we are finding ourselves a context of superdiversity, supermobility and constant change. Some speak of liquid modernity and liminality (Roxburgh 2005:32–33).

Van Aarde (1995:14) is of the opinion that theology is also experiencing a time of change (Smit 1995:9). Theologians often compare the changes facing theology today, with the radical transition that took place between the Middle and Modern ages. Diogenes Allen (1989:2), a philosopher of religion, suggested already towards the end of the 1980ties that: “our intellectual culture is at a major turning point. A massive intellectual revolution is taking place that is

perhaps as great as that which marked off the modern world from the Middle Ages” (see also Burger 1995:13–14).

The history of the world is generally divided into three broad paradigmatic periods: pre-modern, modern, and postmodern (see Van Aarde 1995:20–24).¹

The *pre-modern paradigm* can also be described as the pre-scientific era, an era in which people maintained a pre-scientific, mythical understanding of the world. The *modern era* began after 1517 with Copernicus’ heliocentric theory—the discovery that the earth revolves around the sun (according to Allen 1985:158–162)—which can also be described as the beginning of the scientific era. The start of the *postmodern era*, according to Van Aarde (1995:15), can be traced back to World War I (from 1914–1918) and the worldwide shift in social stratification it brought about. This shift can most clearly be seen in the ending/destruction of most aristocratic monarchies (Van Aarde 1995:15).

In the context of this study we could also have referred to the rise of *Medical Anthropology* during this time—the great amount of contact that took place between the different cultures of the world in the period between World War I (1914–1918) and World War II (1938–1945) gave rise to Western scientists’ realisation of the danger accompanying ethnocentric and anachronistic misinterpretations of sickness in the different cultures of the world. Modernism’s emphasis on reason, objective truths, and optimism—as exemplified in anthropocentric man—has had to start making way for postmodernism’s distrust of systems of power and the idea of universal and objective truth (Burridge & Gould 2004:199). Concepts such as ‘differentiation,’ ‘pluralism’ and ‘scepticism’ have become synonymous with this new paradigm (Burger 2002:19).

At the moment we find ourselves standing in the middle of a *technological and information revolution* (Antón 2001).² Information from all over the globe is made available within mere seconds when using the internet, causing the world to become very ‘small’—a ‘global village’. Ess and Sudweeks (2001) go even further, talking about a “*global culture*” . . . “towards an intercultural global village”. The nature of communication has also been revolutionised: people

1 Van Aarde points out that the term “paradigm”, according to Kuhn ([1962] 1970) and others like e.g. Capra (1982:9), refers to the effect of the totality of thoughts, perceptions, and values that a particular point of view has on reality. Paradigm shifts in science—e.g. the discovery and development of *quantum physics*—cause philosophy to adapt to it, and theology then has no other choice but to also adapt by speaking in new ways; in accordance with the dominant/prevaling philosophy (Van Aarde 1995:16). In this sense it seems that theology is reactive, subjected to the changes taking place in the world.

2 Antón (2001) describes the nature of the global technological revolution with specific reference to bio-nano materials and the way in which it will be used by 2015.

from all over the world can now communicate with one another cheaply and in real time and instantaneously; on television, various programmes from different countries are accessible and can be viewed and global news events and worldwide happenings can be discussed from every possible angle (in terms of nationality, political view, religious belief, etc.). *Different perspectives, different claims to truth, and different views on the elements that constitute a happening thus lead to nuanced and pluriform possibilities of/for conceptualisation.* Because of these developments, Murray (2006) asks the question whether the function of geography is nearing extinction, answering with “globalization and the end of geography”.

This exposure has led to the ever stronger realisation that every person’s truth and worldview is subjective and finite. Though some are of the opinion that this creates an atmosphere of cynicism—the belief that no purely objective truth exists or is knowable—others are inspired to a feeling of humility, because the historically subjective nature of human limitation is acknowledged and accepted. The latter is also my own philosophy and will therefore be my point of departure throughout this work. I realise that I view life and the world through a postmodern, Western, scientific lens; which is also of course a selective lens through which to view this complex subject. But it is because of this instinctive selectivity that it is of such importance to take into account (or reckon with) the unique cultural context of 1st century Temple-orientated Judaism, especially where these sources discuss sickness and/or healing. For the same reason—the attempt at avoiding ethnocentrism—it is of the utmost importance that the difference (or discrepancy) between our Western Biomedical paradigm and the abovementioned ancient cultural paradigm be fully discussed and understood.

1.3 Problem Statement

1.3.1 *The Danger of Ethnocentrism*

The modern reader is not only historically far removed from the ancient context and the initial readers of the text, but culturally as well. To illustrate: if someone two thousand years into the future (i.e. in 4013) were to do excavations and discover a *newspaper article* in *Natal* (South Africa), can you imagine how they would react to the headline “Blue Bulls devour the Sharks on green Loftus after conquering try”. If he/she were to assume that this meant that blue bulls used to roam around Natal in the past, bulls that were vicious and carnivorous creatures, bulls that could devour sharks; they would (of course) be making themselves guilty of an anachronistic and ethnocentric (and therefore

also erroneous) interpretation. South Africans know that Loftus is in the city Pretoria; we know that this headline is associated with a certain type of sport, namely Rugby. Thus we also know that the reader must be/become knowledgeable on both the game and the specific language used when talking about the game in order to understand the headline—for example he/she has to know the rules of rugby to correctly understand the concept of a ‘penalty kick’—making it clear that the headline in question presumes knowledge of the cultural matrix in which we live. But this assumption leads to certain questions: ‘Why does rugby play such an important role in South African society, reaching the front page of all of the country’s biggest newspapers?’ ‘Why does winning/victory and achievement (accomplishment/acclaim) play such a vital role in our society’s thinking?’ But the example also illustrates clearly that, if we are sensitive to our own preconceptions and prejudices and the way in which our worldview and social context differs from other social contexts (whether historical or current), the frequency of erroneous interpretations due to ethnocentricity and anachronicity can be greatly minimised.

When it comes to the healing found in the Bible, it often happens that the modern reader looks at these narratives through their Western Bio-medical lens(es), in the process making themselves guilty of ethnocentric erroneous reading and interpretation. Pilch (2000:40) describes the basic problem as follows: “Many Bible interpreters who live in societies in which scientific Western medicine predominates accept the insights of biomedicine as the only valid interpretation of human sickness”.³

Malina (1983:119–133) accentuates the fact that the Biblical Science student attempting to interpret ancient Mediterranean texts is in actuality busy with cross-cultural research. For this reason a cross-cultural research model needs to be developed, a model that enables the modern reader to study certain phenomena—such as sickness and healing—over cultural borders; thus enabling the reader to correctly compare them.

A good example of this phenomenon can be found in Matthew 4:24 and 17:17. In these texts we read of a certain sickness, *σεληνιαζομένου* which can be translated as ‘moon sickness’. Plutarch describes the effect of ‘moon sickness’ as follows, as quoted in Pilch (2000:19):

3 Pilch has written much on the subject over the years. See Pilch (1981:108–113; 1981a; 1985; 1988a:28–31; 1988b:13–19; 1990:70–95; 1991; 1994:20–31; 1999; 2000).

...οὐδὲν οὖν Θαυμαστόν ἐστὶν καὶ τὴν σελήνην τοῦ ἡλίου διαφέρειν, τοῦ μὲν ξηραντικά τῆς δὲ χαλαστικά καὶ κινητικά τῶν ἐν τοῖς σώμασιν ὑγρῶν ἀφείσης ῥεύματα. Διὸ τὰ μὲν νήπια παντάπασιν αἱ τίτθαι δεικνύναι πρὸς τὴν σελήνην φυλάττονται· πλήρη γὰρ ὑγρότητος ὄντα, καθάπερ τὰ χλωρὰ τῶν ζύλων, σπᾶται καὶ διαστρέφεται. τοὺς δὲ κατακοιμηθέντας ἐν αὐγῇ σελήνης μόλις ἐξανισταμένους οἷον ἐμπλήκτους ταῖς αἰσθήσεσι καὶ ναρκώδεις ὁρώμεν· ἡ γὰρ ὑγρότης ὑπὸ τῆς σελήνης διαχεομένη βαρύνει τὰ σώματα...

Nurses are exceedingly careful to avoid exposing young children to the moon, for, being full of moisture like green wood; they are thrown into spasms and convulsions. And we see that those who have gone asleep in the light of the moon are hardly able to rise again, like men with senses stunned or doped, for the moisture poured through them by the moon makes their bodies heavy.

(*Quaestiones Convivales* III. 10 658 E–F in Clement & Hoffleit 1969:277–278)⁴

A comparison between the different modern translations for the text shows the following:

TABLE 1 *Different translations for ‘moon sickness’*

Bible version	Translation
American Standard Version	Epileptic
King James Version	Those who were lunatics
New International Version	Those having seizures
New Revised Standard Version	Epileptics
Contemporary English Version	Others thought to be crazy
New Afrikaans Version	Geestelik versteurdes [mentally disturbed]
Old Afrikaanse Version	Maansiekies [moon sickness]

4 See *Symposiacs*: Book 3 Question X: Why Flesh stinks sooner when exposed to the Moon, than to the Sun. Euthydemus, Satyrus: “For the moon gently warming makes the body moist; but the sun by his violent beams dries rather, and draws all moisture from them.”

Accessed from <<http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/p/plutarch/symposiacs/chapter3.html>> on 23 Aug 2012.

TABLE 1 *Different translations for 'moon sickness' (cont.)*

Bible version	Translation
<i>Die Boodskap</i> [The message]	Verstandelik versteurdes [mentally disturbed]
Luther Bible	Mondsüchtigen [moon obsession]

Thus, in some translations of the Bible, 'moon sickness' is translated as *epilepsy*, an example of "medico-centrism" (according to Pfifferling 1981), "a species of ethnocentrism that chooses to view texts about sickness and healing from the ancient Middle East in a Western Biomedical perspective" (Pilch 2000:19). Pilch (2000:2) also has the following to say regarding the abovementioned: "Such interpretations—of the Third World or the gospels—illustrate ethnocentrism".

The idea of *ethnocentrism* was conceptualised by William Graham Sumner of Yale University, during the early 1920s. It can be described as "the tendency to judge all other groups by one's own group" (Pilch 2000:2). In light hereof, Pilch warns that "when people of one culture impose their interpretation of reality upon people of another culture, the result is both humorous and pitiful" (Pilch 2000:2).

It is with the above problem and discussion in mind that the discipline of Medical Anthropology developed⁵—in order to do justice to the unique cultural dimensions and content of ideas such as sickness and healing in interpretation (Kleinman 1980). It is these insights from Medical Anthropology that will be discussed and applied in this work. The contribution that Medical Anthropology has made will be discussed and reflected upon further in the *methodology* section. There is a significant difference between the modern Western worldview and culture and the worldview and culture of the ancient Mediterranean, the effect in this specific case being that the nature and treatment of the phenomena sickness and healing differ greatly in many instances. Regarding the topic of this work, my thoughts were especially stimulated by Pilch (2000:21),⁶ who differentiates between the '*curing of a disease*' and the '*healing of an illness*' from a medical-anthropological perspective.⁷ The first

5 See Foster & Anderson (1978).

6 Cf. also Cassell (1976:27–37).

7 Craffert (1999:21) remarks: "The result is that in such a cultural system it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish and separate, say, religion from politics or health care from

phrase traditionally functions within the sphere of the *Western Bio-medical ideology* (Pilch 2000:21); whilst the second phrase functions within the sphere of *Medical and cultural anthropology*. The rationale behind this differentiation lies in the danger and risk of *erroneous ethnocentric interpretations* where the phenomena of sickness and healing are concerned when in dialogue with other non-Western cultures.⁸

Craffert (1999:16) argues that all sickness is in fact a culturally bound phenomenon. He remarks that “in present-day clinical situations between different cultures, medical personnel find it extremely difficult to mediate between the patients’ cultural version of complaints and their own medical training. [T]he reason is all illnesses are coloured by culture” (Craffert 1999:16). Elsewhere he makes the remark that “the difficulty of cross-cultural interpretation should not be underestimated” (Craffert 1999:18).

The medical-anthropological discipline started developing after World War II (1938–1945), when Western physicians started *realising* (and becoming *sensitive* to) the *discrepancy* that exists between *Western* social values and healing practices and systems, and those of *other cultures* they came into contact with (Pilch 2000).⁹

Western Bio-medical practice is dependent upon (and embedded in) *modern scientific and technological infrastructures and instruments*. If one were to open any standard medical textbook, the introduction would already make it clear to you what is meant when talking about sickness from the Western Bio-medical perspective:

Pathology is the study of disease by scientific methods. Disease may, in turn, be defined as an abnormal variation in the structure or function of any part of the body. There must be an explanation of such variations from the normal—in other words, diseases have causes—and pathology includes not only observation of the structural and functional changes throughout the course of a disease, but also elucidation of the factors

religion. Such was the world of the New Testament”: *When thinking about the healing narratives in the New Testament, we must keep in mind that the term “sickness” also had socio-religious implications. A biological pathology did not only entail biological and functional implications like it has today—it also affected/influenced people’s religious existence and status. The health care system must thus be examined in the context of the cultural matrix and not in isolation thereof.*

8 For more on illness in Luke, see Weissenrieder (2003).

9 For example any of the Eastern cultures, who have very different medical and cultural systems.

that cause (*aetiology*) of a disease that logical methods can be sought and developed for its prevention or cure. Pathology may thus be described as the scientific study of the causes and effects of disease.

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The Western Bio-medical practice also functions in the philosophical framework of the modern scientific worldview (*Weltanschauung*). Kleinman (1980:301)¹⁰ postulates: "Bio-medicine is as much ideology as science. It is guided by Western cultural assumptions and thoroughly permeated with a particular theoretical and value orientation". From within this modern Western paradigm questions unique to this scientific worldview (in which the Bio-medical system currently functions) are primary.

Medical anthropologists have made us aware of (and sensitive to) the fact that the concepts of sickness and healing and their definition are relative to specific cultures. For this reason it is so important that modern interpreters of ancient documents must: (1) be aware of their own preconceptions/prejudices and social values; (2) understand the preconceptions and social values of other cultures and take this into account in the process of the interpretation of these ancient documents and their healing narratives.

Usually when the concept of 'sickness' is discussed, the Western Bio-medical worldview is predominant, in my opinion therefore causing the interpreter seldom to consider the full implications of the idea of sickness and the socio-religious implications thereof. The result thereof is that the healing acts of Jesus, in their cultural perspective, are often thought of in a reductionist way; meaning that the full implications of the healing act are not fully developed.

For example, when the text speaks of Jesus healing lepers, we naturally and automatically think from within our Western Bio-medical concept of healing (according to Howard 2001:2). In this light it is not strange that conversations about Jesus acts of healing were either reduced to miracles that did not really take place, or elevated/raised to the status of literal Bio-medical (Western) healings in a fundamentalist way.¹¹

The problem with this type of interpretation is that neither one of the two really does justice to the ancient Mediterranean concepts/values of sickness and healing, or fully develops the pregnant dynamic of sickness and healing (according to Howard 2001:3). Pilch's (2000) alternative concepts stimulated

¹⁰ Cited by Pilch (2000:21).

¹¹ According to Wilkinson (1998:2) Karl Barth (1961:369–371) was the first modern theologian to discuss 'health and healing' in his *Church Dogmatics*. See also in this regard: Tillich (1961:92–100; 1968:293–300); and Moltmann (1985:270–275).

me into thinking differently about Jesus' acts of healing. As already mentioned above, *medical anthropological* thought on the subject makes a clear semantic differentiation between the '*curing of a disease*' and the '*healing of an illness*' (according to Pilch 2000; and Wilkinson 1998:1, 2).¹²

Pilch (2000:2) explains the contribution that Medical Anthropology has made to theology in the following way: "This same information can prevent modern Western readers of the Bible from making ethnocentric judgments when reading accounts of healing in antiquity". Craffert (1991:18) is correct when observing that "ancient healing stories, like all other healing stories, were firmly embedded in the health care systems available at the time and were shaped by the cultural assumptions of the particular system".

Kleinman (1980:72) also argues that the cultural system as a whole is involved in the process of healing, and not only the physician actually healing the sick person.¹³ For this reason the researcher must do both a macro and micro systemic analysis; in order to ascertain in what way small-scale events relate to the larger social structures and processes of/within the system as a whole (in the aforementioned three sectors).

Socio-scientific criticism focus its studies (amongst other things) on the forming/conditioning factors and intentional consequences in the communication process; as well as on the way in which a certain textual communication is a *reflection on*, and a *response to*, a certain social and cultural context (Elliott 1993).¹⁴

Through the use of these exegetical and social-scientific study methods on selected texts, it appears that Jesus¹⁵ more often than not healed those that were believed to be unholy, impure, unclean and out-of-place in the Jewish

12 According to Wilkinson (1998:1) the term 'healing' only recently began appearing in theological textbooks. He also points to the fact that this term 'healing' is not regarded highly or used positively in the Bio-medical world, as physicians prefer to use the term 'curing' instead of 'healing' when talking about healing; and when the term 'healing' is used by physicians, it usually refers to "non-medical methods of treatment. Thus the term 'healing' is used to describe therapies which may either replace or supplement orthodox methods".

13 Glick (already in 1967) showed that, if one were to identify any culture's primary source(s) of power—whether it be political, social, mythological, religious, or technological—one would be able to draw conclusions on the causes and cures of 'illness'.

14 Cf. also Porter & Evans (1997).

15 In the quest for the historical Jesus, John's material has been largely excluded. For the relationship between John's Jesus and the historical Jesus, see Anderson et al. (2006, 2011). Anderson is one of the founding members of the SBL research group that focuses on the question of history in John's Gospel, which has been a neglected field hitherto.

Temple-orientated system of the first century. What is interesting to note here is that Jesus was thus not necessarily only healing those who had a ‘*disease*’ in the Western sense of the word; but also those who had an ‘*ailment/illness*’ in terms of the Jewish Temple-orientated socio-religious system of the day.

The healing of such an ailment/illness (or unholy/impure/unclean person) in the ancient Mediterranean context is thus a particular social phenomenon, which can only be understood within the larger context (or constellation) of the social, economic, political, religious, and cultural factors. *Social phenomena* refer to the patterns and recurring human behaviours that develop as a response to social and cultural factors, leading to established social systems. It refers to patterns of behaviour that have become routine; that have been transferred and internalised through either primary or secondary socialisation (Elliott 1993). But because these factors form part of a larger *social and cultural matrix* they do not/cannot stand compartmentalised and in isolation from one another.

In the 1st century Mediterranean context ‘sickness’ was connected to the socio-religious concepts ‘holy/pure’ or ‘unholy/impure’. Consequently a Bio-medical sickness thus often led to socio-religious marginalisation (see as e.g. Mk 1:40–45). Foreexample, lepers had to let their hair grow long and had to stay outside the city whilst all the while shouting ‘unholy/impure’ as warning to others. Healing in this context would thus especially be about socio-religious restoration or healing, and not just the ‘curing of a disease’ as it functions (and is meant) today within the Western Bio-medical paradigm.

In other words, some people who had been classified as ‘unholy/impure’, for example lepers, were marginalised by being pushed out of the socio-religious system (as seen in Mk 1:40–45). And since ancient man was naturally group-orientated/dyadic, social marginalisation was equal to a death sentence (see Malina et al. 1995). Thus some sicknesses in this *death-impurity* category not only had negative biological implications, but negative socio-religious implications as well. It is in this context that John’s Jesus functioned as a healer, who *in a sense transformed the established socio-religious structure and broke through routine systemic behaviour. In this way he created an alternative symbolic universe. This led to new social and religious values. In a miraculous transformational interaction Jesus healed the sick and disorientated, while simultaneously also creating/shaping new possibilities in and for their lives, in the process.*

Pilch (2000) calls this type of healing the “*healing of an illness*”. Jesus always restored people and made them whole (*healthy*) because he always added a sense of purpose and meaning to their lives. Pilch (2000:134) remarks that it is in this way that Jesus does the work of the One who sent him (according to Jn 5:19–21); and that it was these works that could be described as “life-giving” and “meaning restoring”.

It is thus of utmost importance that the Biblical exegete fully extrapolates and understands the socio-religious cartography as well as the social dynamics of the 1st century. This dimension will be discussed and worked out in further detail/depth in the rest of this work.

1.4 Milgrom versus Douglas

In the research process I became aware of at least two major lines of interpretation, which I shall call the 'Milgrom line of interpretation' and the 'Douglas line of interpretation'. I found small nuanced differences when comparing the interpretations of Milgrom and Douglas. In most contemporary social-scientific literature, certain preconceptions are used as basis on which to build which can (in my opinion) be taken back to the work of Douglas (1966).

The concepts 'holy/pure' and 'unholy/impure' are fundamentally important in the context of the healing narratives found in the Biblical context. 'Unholiness/impurity' goes together with the person's experience of *illness* in/from a cultural perspective; and, in varying degrees of intensity, implied socio-religious marginalisation. Neyrey (1991:285) remarks in the same vein as Douglas (1966), that "those with bodily defects such as the lame, the blind, and deaf are lacking wholeness according to Leviticus 21:16–20. Lacking bodily wholeness, they lack holiness/purity.¹⁶ Such may not be priests nor may they bring offerings into the holy Temple". Pilch (1998:205) agrees with this, remarking that "wholeness finds vivid expression in terms of the human body. One aspect of the 'holy/pure' body is that it must be bodily whole; blemished, maimed, or defective bodies lack wholeness and are disqualified from the presence of God (Lv 21:17–20)".¹⁷ Pilch then refers to further examples of such cases of 'brokenness': the lame (according to Jn 5:6–15; and 7:23); and the man with the crippled or deformed hand (Mt 12:13). Pilch (1991:205) then interprets the significance of Jesus' acts of healing as follows: "His miracles, then, make whole by restoring which was lost . . ."

In contrast to the presuppositions and preconceptions of most contemporary social-scientists (according to Douglas ([1966]; Neyrey [1991]; Pilch [2000];

¹⁶ Cf. Harrington (2004).

¹⁷ Leviticus 21:17–20: "¹⁶The Lord spoke to Moses, ¹⁷Tell Aaron: If any of your descendants (now or in future generations) has a physical defect, he must never bring food to offer to God. ¹⁸Indeed, no one who has a physical defect may ever come near the altar. That means anyone who is blind or lame, who has a disfigured face, a deformity, ¹⁹or a crippled hand or foot, ²⁰who is a hunchback or dwarf, who has defective sight, skin diseases, or crushed testicles'".

Malina [1995]; and McVann [1988]), Milgrom (1991) argues that *the ancient Jews did not marginalise individuals socio-religiously on the grounds of physical disabilities, such as being lame or blind*. Milgrom (1991:1001) argues that definite distinctions need to be made between the following two categories: ‘holy’ and ‘common’ over and against ‘unclean’ and ‘clean’. Milgrom (1991:1001) refers to Leviticus 21:17–20 when postulating that:

A blemished animal or priest is not impure but common (“hol”). As for the prohibition against the blemished in the sanctuary, it only applies to priests officiating in the sanctuary and to animals offered on the altar. By contrast, any blemished Israelite—priest and lay person alike—may enter the sacred precincts and offer his sacrifices.

MILGROM 1991:1001

According to Milgrom (1991:1002), the Jews only believed those objects or persons showing signs of so-called ‘*death-impurities*’ to be ‘unholy/impure’. According to him, the following cases were believed to be (or labelled as) ‘death impurities’: dead objects and the places where they had been, semen, blood, skin diseases, open wounds, etc. So any object that reminded the Jews of the sphere of death were believed to be ‘unholy/impure’. From this Milgrom argues that neither the blind nor the lame were associated with ‘death-impurities’, and therefore could not be classified as *unholy/impure*. According to him the lame would thus not have been labelled as ‘unholy/impure’, but only as ‘common’. From this it becomes clear that, in current research and literature, there are at least two major lines of interpretation that exhibit small nuanced differences. But these small nuanced differences have serious implications when it comes to interpreting the healing narratives in John.

The healing narratives to be found in John have to do with certain realities pertaining to sickness—such as being paralysed (see Jn 5), and being blind (see Jn 9)—both are examples of the important socio-religious implications that the reality of sickness brought about. It is clear from my literature study that learned scholars such as Milgrom (1991) and others such as Douglas (1966), Neyrey (1991), Pilch (1991; 2000), and Malina (1991) differ from each other when it comes to understanding sickness—such as blindness and paralysis—and their relation to ‘holiness/purity’ and ‘unholiness/impurity’ as well as the socio-religious implications thereof.¹⁸

18 Neusner (1973).

This discrepancy between these different scholars brings a research gap to the fore.¹⁹

1.5 Research Gap

1.5.1 *What will be the Focus of the Research Done in this Work, and how was the Decision for this Line of Research Made?*

With the problem statement discussed above in mind, this work will undertake a study within the framework of the research gap in question with the following points of departure:

- The relationship between *sickness* and *brokenness* over and against *healing* and *restoration* in John will be investigated.
- As a rule, in the process of working with John's *unique theology* and his presentation of *healing miracles* as *σημεῖα*, great sensitivity will be used.

19 In this context I maintain the preconception that those that had physical disabilities (such as being paralysed or blind) experienced socio-religious marginalisation in some form or another in the context of 1st century's Temple-orientated Judaism. I am of the opinion that the stories of healing found in John are excellent examples hereof; for example: John refers to a man that has been blind for 38 years who does not even have someone to put him into the water of the fountain. In a group-orientated/dyadic culture he is someone without any family or friends—thus someone on the very edge of society. This man's disability is believed to be because of sin, as sin and unholiness/impurity go hand in hand. But after he has been healed, he is banned by the socio-religious leaders of the day—the ones who embody and instigate/enforce the socio-religious process of marginalisation. In the same way Lazarus' sickness leads to death—the culminating marginalising reality. Milgrom (1991) refers to this as “death-impurity”. Jesus restores Lazarus' life to him, along with the many possibilities that life brings. In this same context the negative reaction of the socio-religious representatives is described—they plan to have both Lazarus and Jesus killed. Thus it appears as if the reality of socio-religious marginalisation plays a decisive role in the Gospel of John. Over and against the negative socio-religious attitude of the Jews Jesus comes to create qualitative life-giving possibilities and to overcome all estrangement between man and God through the establishment of His family on earth (according to Jn 1:12). In John Jesus thus opens the sluices of heaven, building a bridge between man and God and reconciling God and man, gathering God's family on earth. Interesting to note here is that the word for reconciliation is never used in the Gospel of John; the word *ἰλασμός* (reconciliation) is found in Johannine literature, in 1 John 2:2. The preconceptions that have been described above thus have to be either verified or falsified in the rest of this work.

- John's view of *spiritual healing*, and the way in which he relates physical and spiritual healing (according to Jn 12:40; and 9:41) will also be investigated. It will be argued that those who want to say anything about healing in John need to include 'spiritual healing' in the discussion.
- In conclusion, the way in which the resurrection is integrated with, and related to the other acts of healing, will be discussed. Put another way, the *role of the resurrection as the culminating life-giving healing act* in John will be examined; but then also as *the σημεῖον* from which the other signs receive their meaning and significance.²⁰
- It thus becomes clear that this study will be about the healing acts of Jesus, the significance of these acts against the background of the ancient Mediterranean culture, and their application as σημεῖα in John in order to illustrate that Jesus is the source of all life and human spiritual healing or restoration (see Jn 20:30–31).

1.6 Basic Terms and Definitions

For the purposes of this work some of the definitions of Kleinman (1980) will be used, as these are currently accepted by most Medical Anthropologists as being the most fitting definitions.²¹

Of course these definitions will be looked at critically before using them, with the help of the information to be found in the New Testament itself.

1.6.1 *Sickness as an Umbrella Term for Disease and Illness*

'Sickness' is used as an umbrella term within the Medical Anthropological discipline to refer to or express a person's experience of, both 'disease' and

20 With this is meant that the Jesus events and the Gospel as told by John are told through the lens of the reality of the resurrection. In other words the resurrection serves as the lens through which the Jesus events are told. The life-theology of John is further influenced by the background of the unity that John maintains between the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (according to Jn 1:1–4; 2:17–19; 3:14–16; 10:17–18; 20:30–31).

21 Take a look at the following websites where articles from scholars in Anthropology can be found. The article used here is that of Hahn and Kleinman (1983) with the title: "Biomedical Practice and Anthropological Theory: Frameworks and Directions". It is about the development of *Biomedicine*, the Western Biomedical worldview as a subdivision of Anthropology: <<http://arjournals.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.an.12.100183.001513?cookieSet=1&journalCode=anthro>>; see also Caplan et al. (1981); Eisenberg (1977); Engelhardt Jr. (1981 and 1986); Fitzpatrick (1984); Landy (1977); Ohnuki-Tierney (1981 and 1984); and as adapted by Young (1982) in Pilch (2000:24).

'illness'.²² Pilch (1991:191) remarks: "Think of 'sickness' as *genus*, and 'disease' and 'illness' as *species*."

It can be graphically depicted as follows:

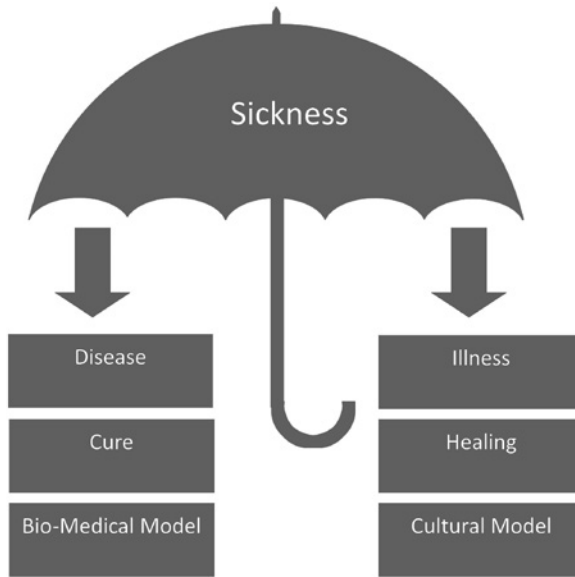


FIGURE 1 *'Sickness' as an umbrella term for 'disease' and 'illness'.*

This abovementioned differentiation, made by Medical Anthropology, is of utmost importance for this hypothesis. Thus, when 'sickness' is referred to in this work, it is done primarily from within a 1st century Temple-orientated perspective of *illness* rather than from within the Western paradigm of *'disease'*:

'Disease' is a concept describing abnormalities in the structure and/or function of human organs and systems; including pathological illnesses, even though they are not necessarily culturally recognised (Foster 1976). The term 'disease' thus belongs to the arena of the Bio-medical paradigm and model (cf. Kleinman 1980; and Lipowski 1969). Engelhardt Jr. (1981:39) focuses attention on the fact that Bio-medical healing practices have as a goal the 'healing' of the constellation of signs and symptoms of a specific 'disease' through 'explanation, prediction, and control'. Pilch (2000:25) remarks that "the Bio-medical jargon for these strategies is diagnosis, prognosis, and therapy;

²² See also Fitzpatrick (1984:11–31).

and these concepts lead into the field of power and politics" (refer also to Glick 1967; and Pilch 1991a, 1992a, and 1992b).

Illness is a concept that describes the human (culturally bound) '*perception, experience, and interpretation*' of certain socially 'disvalued states', not exclusively limited to 'disease' (see Worsley 1982:27). 'Illness' is both a personal and a social reality, and for this reason is also a cultural construct (Kleinman 1974; and Lewis 1981). Culture principally determines what people experience, which values are of importance, how these values are expressed, and how an '*illness*' is lived with (Weindman 1988). Pilch (1991:191) explains it as follows: "The concept and word 'illness' reflect a socio-cultural perspective that depends entirely upon social and personal perception of certain socially disvalued states including but not necessarily restricted to what modern Western science would recognize as disease". As an example thereof we look at the haemorrhaging woman in Temple-orientated Jewish thought: This woman had an '*illness*' and was therefore believed to be 'unholy/impure/unclean'. The implication/result of this belief was that anything that she sat on, touched, walked past, *et cetera*, was believed to be contaminated and therefore also became 'unholy/impure/unclean'. Though this woman was not necessarily biologically 'sick', culturally she was judged to be (believed to be) 'un-well' and as such to be a source of pollution; someone with an 'ailment' or being in a 'broken state'. So, 'brokenness' is seen in stark contrast to the Jewish Temple-orientated concept of 'holiness/purity' as a state of 'wholeness'. As a sick person she is not completely 'whole' anymore—she is 'sick' or 'broken'. The Biblical narratives describe Jesus' transformational interaction with the woman as an act of healing. In this book the words 'illness', 'ailment', and/or 'brokenness' will be used to give expression to such a socio-cultural state of '*illness*'.

Curing is the anticipated outcome/result relative to 'disease', and can be understood as the taking of effective control over the biological and psychological processes associated with 'disease' (Pilch 2000:25).

Healing/restoration only arises in connection with 'illness', and includes the formulation of personal and social meaning and significance in 'light' of 'illness' and its resulting problems (cf. Wilkinson 1998:1–6). One of the major problems of Bio-medical practice is that the primary focus is on the 'curing' of a 'disease', whilst the patient also has need of the 'healing' of an 'illness' (Pilch 2000:25). 'Healing', in other words, is a social experience and has a social function. Kleinman (1974:210), quoted in Pilch (2000:25), rightly shows that "healing is one of the primary forms of symbolic action". In this book the words 'healing', 'restoration', and even 'repair' are used to describe the healing acts of Jesus. The prevailing preconception is that Jesus, through this transformational interaction, is 'healing the brokenness' (or illness, which can include disease)

of the individual by ‘curing’ them/him/her of their ‘disease’ and ‘restoring’ their ‘brokenness’ (illness). Wilkinson (1998:5) points out that: “Another aspect of our use of the word healing in this book is that we include three categories of the restoration to normality within this scope. These are the healing of the body, the casting out of demons and the raising of the dead”. In the same vein as Wilkinson, this work also favours a broader understanding of the terms ‘sickness’ and ‘healing’—as argued for above with ‘illness’ and ‘healing’.

*Health*²³ is a difficult concept to define as it is not always precisely clear what you would be losing if you were to ‘lose your good health’. In general, any definition of ‘health’, is descriptive in nature; for this reason it plays a very important role in any given society. In a typical Western country, for example the United States of America, where achievement and success and self-reliance are core cultural values; health would be defined as:

The ability to perform those functions which allow the organism to maintain itself, all other things being equal, in the range of activity open to most other members of the species (for example, within two standard deviations from the norm) and which are conducive toward the maintenance of its species.

ENGELHARDT JR. 1981:32, QUOTED IN PILCH 2000:24

Pilch (2000:24) accentuates the classic definition of ‘health’ by the World Health Organisation: “... state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity ...”²⁴ In conclusion it can be said that health can be better understood as “a condition of well-being as understood by a given culture in a particular point in time” (Pilch 2000:24).

1.7 Hypothesis

In this work the hypothesis is that Jesus (according to John’s Gospel) healed people who were in a state of ‘sickness’, ‘brokenness’, and ‘disorientation’ (sometimes even ‘marginalisation’)—which can be broadly related to the category of ‘death’ or ‘loss of life potentiality’. Jesus, as a transformation agent,

23 See Wilkinson (1998:7–21) for a discussion of the Biblical understanding of health, as he discusses the concepts ‘disease’ and ‘healing’ in both the Old and New Testament (see also Wilkinson 1998:31–53; 63–142).

24 Naturally this definition is not accepted by all exponents of the Western Bio-medical science world since healing is described as a substantive form or situation/state.

creates new life by 'healing' the individual through a transformational interaction; 'restoring' their 'brokenness' by creating new possibilities for his/her life. In this process the individual's situation and emotional 'disorientation' and 'death' is changed to a situation of reorientation and a new representation of reality, with the resulting new possibilities for life flowing from this change.

In this book an attempt will also be made to prove that those who want to speak about 'healing in John' need to include the category of 'spiritual healing' as it is an inseparable part of the 'life-theology' of John.

An attempt will also be made to prove that the acts of 'healing' in John, ultimately include the resurrection as central and cumulative life-giving restorative act of healing and spiritual restoration.²⁵

1.8 Research Methodology

New Testament scientific research methods display constant development and growth, especially when looking at the last few decades (see Lategan 1984:3; Snyman 1991:86; and Thiselton 1980:10). In recent history this dynamic has led to the working with/use of other disciplines, when studying the New Testament; for example Craffert (1991 & 1999) argues that today, more than ever before, interdisciplinary study is a crucial undertaking (cf. Horrell 1999:3). The motivation behind this move can be found in the fact that the different perspectives from other disciplines not only enrich, but also challenge, the conclusions of individual fields of research (Groenewald 2005:7).

It is for this very reason that the research results from the Medical Anthropological field will be used when studying and thinking about the Biblical narratives of 'healing' from within a 'cultural perspective' (according to Turner 1980; Fabrega 1971; and Pilch 2000:23). The Bio-medical model for healing focuses exclusively on 'outcomes-based healing' from within a Physical Sciences viewpoint (Pilch 2000:23); whilst Medical Anthropology is especially

25 The sick were considered to be unholy/impure/unclean in the ancient Mediterranean context. This meant socio-religious marginalisation. The individual involved in such an unfavourable social and religious position experiences a sense of loss and marginalisation; leading him/her to the question of meaning and significance. Jesus, as bridge-builder and healer, achieves *optimal religious healing* and creates *functional social healing or restoration*. Jesus does this by restoring: (1) people to their rightful position before God, (2) functional possibilities for life on a social level. But Jesus doesn't just heal the sickness, he transforms the situation by restoring their brokenness (the antithesis of wholeness). This restoration has the latent potential to lead to reconciliation with God and with society. To quote Pilch (2000:130): "Jesus as healer restores to life and restores meaning to life".

interested in the restoration of lost 'meaning/significance' and the creation of 'new meaning/significance' to life. In this light, and in order to achieve their goals, Medical Anthropology makes use of the hermeneutical dimension that is to be found in 'healing' (Pilch 2000:23).

This has led exponents of Medical Anthropology to develop the 'Ethno-medical paradigm', as an alternative to the 'Bio-medical paradigm' (Pilch 2000:23). According to Kleinman (1980:377) this paradigm is better able to interpret and describe the human experience of 'health', 'sickness', and 'healing'. Pilch (2000:24) supports this statement, and goes on to draw attention to the importance and the contribution of Medical Anthropology in dialogue with New Testament sciences/studies:

Interdisciplinary specialists point out that the best interdisciplinary co-operation is often that carried out in the mind of a single researcher, an expert in one field who borrows eclectically from other disciplines and creatively integrates a variety of insights.

PILCH 2000:24

So the contribution that Medical Anthropology, as one of the most developed subdivisions of Anthropology, can and does make, is very useful for any scholar of the New Testament (cf. Pilch 2000). The reason for this is that it has taken over the perspectives from all the other subdivisions and uses them as a foundation for further developments. If the New Testament scholar were to enter into a cross-cultural dialogue with Medical Anthropology with a focus on the topic/subject of 'sickness' and 'healing', the result would be greater than the sum of its parts.

Therefore, in this book insights from Social Sciences will to a great extent be made use of to interpret the Biblical narratives of 'healing' within their cultural context.²⁶ As has already been stated, it is of the utmost importance that the modern reader of ancient documents displays a sensitivity toward the cultural system of both the writer and the text's first readers. In the exegetical process, the use of social-scientific criticism is a very crucial phase in which the primary focus is on the social and cultural dimensions of the text. Elliott (1993:7) defines social-scientific criticism as follows:

Social-scientific criticism of the Bible is that phase of the exegetical task which analyzes the social and cultural dimensions of the text and of

²⁶ Cf. Malina (1982:267–277) on the importance of social sciences and Biblical interpretation more than 30 years ago. Cf. also Malina (1983:119–133; 1986a:92–101; 1986b; 1996a; 1993).

its environmental context through the utilization of the perspectives, theory, models, and research of the social sciences.

ELLIOTT 1993:7

Historical criticism is seen as a sub-discipline of exegesis, complementing/supplementing all the other exegetical sub disciplines (Elliott 1993:340).²⁷ According to Elliott (1993:8), social-scientific criticism differs from these other sub disciplines in the sense that it focuses on the text as a reflection on (and a response to) the social and cultural context within which the text came into being; as well as on the way in which the text was designed to function as a medium for social interaction (Elliott 1993:10). The goal in the social sciences is to unlock/ascertain and discuss both the explicit and implicit possible social implications of a text. This is as a result of the interaction between the social and cultural systems and the framework of meaning of both the author and the original audience. The text in question did not just originate within a specific social and cultural context, it also has an implicit and unique *social dimension* that has to be taken into account (Elliott 1993:9).

If one wants to study 'sickness' and 'healing' in the Bible, it is thus necessary that one takes into account that these phenomena play out within a larger constellation of social, economic, religious, political, and cultural factors (Elliott 1993:9). Social-scientific criticism's unique contribution is its knowledge of the social sciences (e.g. sociology, anthropology, archaeology), which it brings into dialogue with the Biblical texts.

Exegesis has as its goal the determination of the meaning(s) of the Biblical text within its original context by way of a comprehensive study of all the different elements that form part of the text (i.e. textual, literary, linguistic, historic, traditional, redactional, rhetorical, theological, as well as social).

Anthropologists distinguish/differentiate between 'high context' and 'low context' societies: in high context societies (like the one in which the Biblical text came into being) knowledge regarding the social context is assumed. Elliott (1993:11) notes in this regard that "accordingly, it is presumed in such societies that contemporary readers will be able to 'fill in the gaps' and 'read between the lines.'" For this reason it is absolutely necessary for the modern interpreter to do research with this assumed knowledge of the larger social and cultural matrix, in which the text took shape, kept firmly in mind. Elliott (1993:11) is correct in this regard when he says that:

27 The other exegetical sub disciplines are: text criticism; literary criticism; narrative criticism; historical criticism; tradition criticism; form criticism; redaction criticism; rhetorical criticism; and theological criticism. Elliott (1993:7–8) gives a short summary of the different exegetical sub disciplines' goals involved. Also see Egger (1996) in this regard.

This need for apposite reading scenarios is necessary so that modern readers avoid the twin errors of an anachronistic and ethnocentric reading of ancient Mediterranean texts, that is, reading into the text information from some present social context rather than comprehending the text in accord with its own contemporary social and cultural scripts.

ELLIOTT 1993:11

According to Elliott (1993:18), 'social studies' can be divided into five categories:

TABLE 2 *Categories of social studies*

Category	Focus	Exponents
1. Study ' <i>social realia</i> '	Describes ancient communities without analysing/explaining them	Joachim Jeremias Frederich Grant Abraham Malherbe
2. Integration of political and economic phenomena with social phenomena	Makes use of an historical conceptual framework, rather than a social-scientific one	Martin Hengel Wolfgang Stegemann
3. Study of the origin/genesis of Christendom, as well as its social organisation and its social institutions	Consciously make use of social theories and models; results in social descriptions and explanations regarding early Christendom	Gert Theissen Wayne Meeks
4. Context Group	Study the social and cultural environment of the New Testament; look at the social and cultural manuscripts that influence social interaction; use theories from cultural anthropology	Bruce Malina Jerome Neyrey
5. Analysis of Biblical texts	Uses research, theories, and models from the social sciences to analyse Biblical texts	Fernando Belo John Elliott Norman Peterson

ADAPTED FROM ELLIOTT 1993:18

It is for this reason that the most recent works from Pilch (2000) and Malina & Neyrey (1991) are used to such good effect in this study. According to Elliott, Malina and Neyrey could be positioned under the so-called 'context group'. Scholars that are a part of this group reflect on 'sickness' and 'healing' specifically from within the social-scientific idiom, whilst also investigating and discussing both the social and cultural contexts of the New Testament. They have also developed certain theoretical constructs with which to interpret Biblical narratives (for example 'honour' and 'shame'). In his turn, Pilch (2000) discusses and makes use of the insights of Medical Anthropology in combination with the social-scientific insights of Malina and Neyrey on themes such as 'holiness/purity' and 'unholiness/impurity' as well as 'honour and shame'.

I am comfortable within this social-scientific matrix, and will therefore use the abovementioned theories critically, but also fruitfully. It appears that Pilch (2000), in his book *Healing in the New Testament*, does not do justice to the unique nature of John's theology and does not engage with problematic exegetical matters. For example, he does not identify and discuss either the 'semeia- or the *life-theology*' found in John. Though a personal choice is made for social sciences, this study does try to dialogue with other scholars (that do not agree with this choice). The most prominent exponent and the one from who I personally learnt the most is Milgrom (1991). He wrote an extensive commentary on Leviticus where he publicly differed from contemporary social scientists on several crucial issues. In this study I will attempt to maintain a healthy balance between the "Pilch school" and the "Milgrom school" by constantly being sensitive to the dynamics of the 'healing narratives' in the texts themselves and in this way guarding against too easily forcing theories and concepts onto the text.

1.9 Hermeneutic Approach

All research and observation implies certain theoretical and methodological starting points and preconceptions (Heidegger 1962; Koningsveld 1977:126; and De Villiers 1984) which naturally grow (develop and/or change) over an extended period of time (cf. Kümmel 1970; Stuhlmacher 1975; Bruce 1979:21–59; Lategan 1982; and Thiselton 1980; 1992:142). In this part of the study I will attempt to give an exposition of how I understand the hermeneutic process in relation to my own methodological approach when arguing this hypothesis.

1.9.1 *Hermeneutics as Communication Dynamic*

New Testament Hermeneutics are seen as the ‘theory of understanding’, with the interpretation of ancient New Testament texts as a goal (see Smit 1987; 1988:441; and Thiselton 1980:10–11).²⁸ In this regard Lategan (1992:149) remarks:

In the most general terms, Hermeneutics can be described as the “art of understanding”. Used in its narrower sense, Hermeneutics can refer to the method and techniques used to interpret written texts. In a wider sense, it can refer to the conditions which make understanding possible and even to the process of understanding as a whole. In theology, it is usually used in contrast to exegesis—the former is understood as the theory, the latter as the practice of interpretation.

LATEGAN 1992:149

Hermeneutics thus has to do with the *Verstehen* (understanding) of a distant ancient Mediterranean *Erlebnis* (experience) in a certain context, an attempt to dialogue with the text in order to be able to come to a *Nacherleben* (re-experience) (Lategan 1992:149).

In this sense Hermeneutics can also be seen as a communication process since interaction or dialogue does take place, in an attempt at reconstructing meaning and formulating it understandably (Van der Merwe 1995:52).

In an attempt to get at the purpose and meaning of John’s witness (gospel) as text type (narrative text)²⁹ it is useful to look at it from within the framework of a communication process (cf. Smit 1987; and Roberts 1979:48–58).

Any successful communication process requires the presence of the following three elements/dimensions:

- Sender,
- Message, and
- Receiver.

28 Cf. Ricoeur (1975:265), Rousseau (1985:95). According to Roberts (1979:58) it should be understood as the “theory of scriptural exposition”. Du Rand (1990:7) accentuates the fact that the meaning of, and communication with the Johannine message flows from an interpretation of the text of the Gospel of John itself. Cf. Ricoeur (1975:265); Rousseau (1985:95).

29 Narrative world refers to the literary world in which the story takes place.

If one of these elements/dimensions is absent, communication becomes impossible.

The following figure, done by Van der Merwe (1995:52), illustrates a conventional communication model:

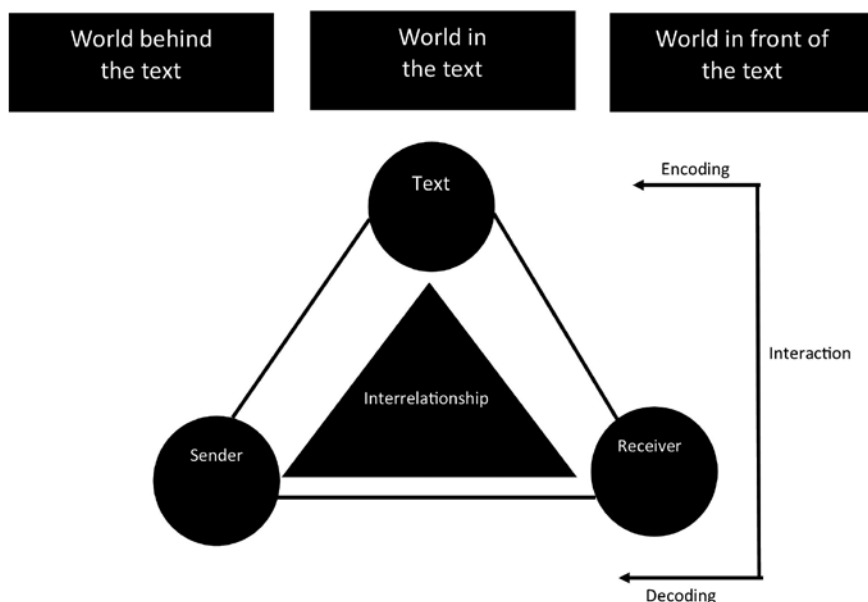


FIGURE 2 *Communication model.*

The New Testament text is a textual embodiment of a specific communication process through which a 'sender' wanted to give a certain 'message' to a specified 'audience' in a specific 'context'. Not only is the text a product of the interaction between different people in a specific socio-historic and cultural context;³⁰ but, at the same time, the text as a whole is also a product for which the meaning relies on its inter- and intra-textual contexts. In the hermeneutic process, we are thus attempting to come to an understanding of the meaning that the original historic author had in mind, with the underlying knowledge that a giant historical and cultural cleft exists between the modern reader and the ancient author. For this reason, the 'coming to an understanding' of the text is by implication always preliminary.

30 Cf. De Villiers (1984:6–79).

1.9.2 *Current Trends in the Hermeneutics Debate*

I will not attempt to go into detail on the Hermeneutics debate here, but simply to explain my own position in the context of the development of its history.³¹ Van der Merwe's (1995:48)³² model, which he in turn took over from Lategan (1984:3), is adapted here in an attempt to explain the history (see Lategan 1992:150–154) and development of Hermeneutics:

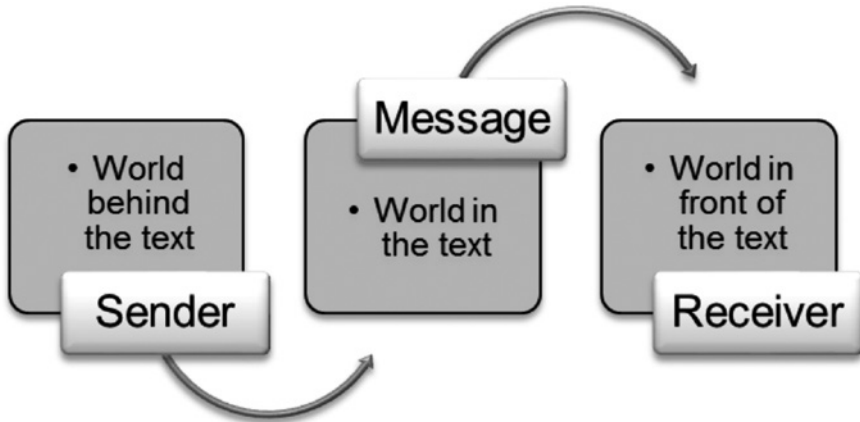


FIGURE 3 *Sender, message, receiver.*

The distinction between Sender, Message, and Receiver and the direction/movement trends from Sender, to Message, to Receiver represent “three different groups of theories regarding the locus and actualization of meaning: author-centred, text-centred and reader-centred approaches to the text” (Van der Merwe 1995:48; See also Lategan 1984:2).³³

The *Sender-centred approach* focuses on the world behind the text, the historical context within which the text originated, the circumstances of the author, and the production of the text. This approach originated with the awakening of the historical awareness of humanity and is characteristic of the historical-critical methodology (according to text criticism, source criticism, form criticism, tradition criticism, and redactional criticism).

31 For information regarding the history of theological Hermeneutics the following sources are recommended: Kümmel (1970); Bruce (1983:21–59); Tate (1991) and Thiselton (1992:142ff).

32 Following in the footsteps of Lategan (1984:3).

33 According to Lategan (1984:2ff); Longman (1987:19ff) and Tate (1991:xvi).

The *Message-centred approach* focuses on the world within the text, on “text preservation and mediation” (Van der Merwe 1995:49). With the rise of ‘new criticism’³⁴ and structuralism the pendulum has swayed from (diachronic) historical criticism to (synchronic) autonomous text criticism.³⁵ Here it is assumed that the locus of meaning can be found in the structural composition of the text itself (according to Mlakuzhyil 1987:17ff).

The *receptor-centred approach* represents a more recent development that focuses on the world in front of the text and on the relationship between the text and the reader (Lategan 1984:3; and 1992:151–152). This approach is, in a certain sense, more interested in the effect of communication—the mechanics thereof (Van der Merwe 1995:49).³⁶ Lategan (1992:151–152) remarks:

In recent hermeneutical reflection, the pragmatic aspect of texts has gained in importance. Various factors contributed to this development. Speech act theory focused attention on the effect of verbal communication. Similarly, the revival of rhetorical criticism is directly linked to an interest in the persuasive potential of biblical material. Up to this point the role and situation of the receiver hardly formed part of hermeneutical reflection. But the advance of reader theories in literature and the appearance of contextual theologies (black, liberation, feminist), made it imperative to include the context of reception in any effective hermeneutical design. Deconstruction and post-modern theories pose a challenge to the structural and new critical concept of the autonomy of the

34 New Criticism refers to a general trend in literary theory that was a trademark of the 1940’s–1950’s. Longman remarks: “The literary work is self-sufficient; the author’s intention and background are unimportant to the critic” (Longman 1987:25, quoted in Van der Merwe 1995:49).

35 This trend became especially popular in the 1970’s, when greater emphasis was placed on the text itself. It can be seen especially in the various structural approaches that came to the fore at this time. Here the focus was especially centred on the linguistic surface structure of the text, in order to get at its meaning; the build-up of the text; as well as the relationship between the different parts; according to the French structuralists Greimas’ and Patte’s structuralist approach. In the same way the South African structure analysis is focused on the linguistic surface structure of the text, with the emphasis on the text’s binding and cohesiveness (Du Rand 1990:7).

36 See Jonker (1996:77) who accentuates the relationship between exegesis and communication theory. He remarks that “Biblical exegesis should thus be done within the framework of communication theory. This interest in communication can also be related to the influence of and interaction with textual linguistics and textual theory”.

text and attempt to move beyond what is seen as the foundationalism of reader studies and the modernist position.

LATEGAN 1992:151–152

Du Rand (1990:6) draws attention to the fact that the focus in past research on the Gospel of John was very one-sided with regard to the origin of the text, which naturally meant that not enough attention was paid to the reception of the text (see Nicol 1972:1; Fortna 1970, 1988; Brown 1970; and Schnackenburg 1965–1984). Thus it has often happened that the unity of the Gospel and the relationship between reader and text was not given due attention by the historical-critical approach (Du Rand 1990:6; and Lategan 1992:151–152). One of the biggest problems in the understanding of the Gospel of John exists in the great cleft between the original historical context of the Gospel and its modern/contemporary readers.

For just this same reason this work will make use of the insights of socio-linguistics (and the social sciences) in which the “setting” of both the text and the reader are believed to be important in the interpretation of text information, since both the text and the reader are not only historically, but also culturally quite far removed from each other.³⁷ In this work the risk/danger of ethnocentrism in the interpretation of the meaning of sickness and healing in cultural perspective is accentuated.³⁸

1.9.3 Summary

Deist (1983:128) is correct in saying that by adopting different approaches or accents, each serves a valuable/worthwhile contribution to the interpretation of a text, and serves as a compliment to the other approaches. Of course certain texts have a more natural affinity to certain approaches. Each of these approaches highlights specific aspects of the text. Therefore the exegete must clearly explain the topic of research, as well as the specific limitations/restrictions and boundaries of the methodological approaches to be used.³⁹ In

37 According to Theissen (1983:3) the sociological approach is a logical result of an historical-critical methodology. Cf. Thiselton (1992:10), for additional perspectives on “new horizons in the development of Hermeneutics”.

38 I agree with Van der Merwe (1995:51) that “one must therefore adopt the viewpoint that the linguistic-literary perspective is embedded in a socio-historical situation”.

39 It is common knowledge that each method asks particular questions of the text, which then result in specific answers. In the *formgeschichtliche* approach, the text is seen as a collection of traditions that have been placed in a narrative framework by some collector at the end of a sociological process. According to the *redaktionsgeschichtliche* approach

the context of the question of the relationship between the diachronic and the synchronic approaches to text interpretation, it is important to maintain a balanced⁴⁰ approach with an openness to all appropriate dimensions.⁴¹ Together with Du Rand (1990:8) I will choose as methodological premise a multi-dimensional combination, where the positives of the historical-critical approaches⁴² are used where and when deemed applicable and appropriate. Consequently the Gospel of John will in this work be viewed as a theological narrative, and not as *bruta facta*. For this reason the intent of the theological narrative—in terms of the healing narratives especially—will be the focus of the exegetical process. The presupposition that the healing narratives are signs (σημεῖα) which point to the Johannine truth claim that Jesus is the giver of life (according to Jn 20:30–31), is maintained.

1.10 The Gospel of John as Narrative Text

As the Gospel of John is a narrative text, it has to be examined by way of narrative exegesis and reception. The Gospel of John reflects (in its narrative schema)⁴³ a logical narrative build-up in the midst of textual techniques such as chiasms (18:28–19:6), irony (4:12; 7:35; 8:22), misunderstanding (7:4; 14), double meanings (3:3), *inclusio* (2:11; 4:46, 45) *etcetera* (Du Rand 1990:10). The author of the Gospel of John's narrative is characterised by narrative content followed by elocutionary discourse. The narrative and the commentary on the narrative are thus integrated to a unit masterfully in the Gospel.

The author of the Gospel created a *narrated world* with which the *author* attempts to draw the reader into the narrative. In this narrated world that the author constructs we find different characters who come to the fore that stand in a certain relation to each other—they reveal their own viewpoints,

specific editors interpreted these traditions theologically and modified them in accordance with the specific situation the community in which they lived was faced.

40 Compare with Du Rand (1990:6).

41 The reason being that the nature of the Gospel of John demands that it be interpreted historically by way of the history of its origin, its contents, its transference/conveyance, and its canonisation. But, in saying this, it is not also said that the Gospel of John can or must be understood *bruta facta*.

42 Like the redaction criticism; structural (linguistic surface structure); and structural (narrative structure) approaches.

43 Important to take note of is that the narrative's direction is not synonymous with the narrative itself—a differentiation is made between the cohesiveness of the narrative and the content of the narrative.

they act in specific ways toward other characters and toward the protagonist relationally. The exegete's task is (amongst other things) to attempt to take on the viewpoint of the author as his/her own in order to be able to see how the author envisioned the mutual relationships. By using commentary the author of John is giving the reader an insight into the literary world, insight not revealed to the characters in the story.⁴⁴ In this way the narrator is leading the reader in a specific direction. Du Rand (1990:10) draws attention to the fact that the narrated world of the Gospel narrative is not always the same as either the world of Jesus or the world of the evangelist. The narrated world is simply a construed literary world created/invented by the author.

The author of the Gospel of John thus did not just present a clinical report of the *bruta facta*, but also artfully presented a more life-giving interpreted theological narrative (according to Du Rand 1990:11). Characteristic of any narrative, the Gospel also has a clearly outlined plot, a dominant perspective from which it is being told, characters, and a specific message that it wants to communicate (Du Rand 1986:9–17). In the Gospel of John the narrator's perspective centres on the questions surrounding Jesus' identity and on what he—as the sent Son of God—came to do on earth (namely to give life, according to Jn 20:30–31). The Johannine witness (gospel) as text type (narrative text) must also be looked at from within the framework of a communication process (cf. Du Rand 1990:12):

- The *real author* and the *real readers*
 - Both are extra-textual entities
 - Both are presented as belonging to the historical context of a written piece of literature.
 - The real author however, constructs the narrative and then presents it in such a way that it projects a certain image of the author through the narrator.
 - This image does not necessarily agree with the real identity of the real author.
 - This projected image refers to the implied author.

44 According to John 13:2, where the reader in the literary is told about Judas' plans and his possession by the devil. The disciples in the actual situation have no knowledge hereof. Here the reader thus knows more than the characters in the narrative itself because of the commentary made by the author for the reader.

- The *implied author* and the *implied readers*
 - The ‘implied author’ manifests in and through the accumulation of the choices of the real author in the setup, irony, characterisation, distance, time, narrator’s perspective etc.⁴⁵
 - The choices that the real author makes, create a certain spiritual image of the author and ultimately influences the way in which the reader reacts to the content.
 - In the Gospel of John there is no differentiation between the viewpoint or perspective of the real author and the implied author.
 - The implied author and the implied reader (the real reader that the real author had in mind), as well as the narrator and the audience all act as textual literary functions (cf. Du Rand 1990:12).
- Story course/narrative
 - The relationships between the characters and the events that take place constitute the *story course*. The Gospel of John’s plot contains an inherent tenseness, because of the unique ‘mission motif’ that is presented in the Gospel. Jesus’ pre-existence (according to Jn 1:1–18) creates a loadedness which is definitely of crucial hermeneutic importance for the rest of the narrative (Du Rand 1990:13).
- *Implicit or indirect commentary*
 - *Implicit or indirect commentary* refers to (amongst other things) the phenomena of ‘irony’ and ‘symbology’ as they are techniques with which the implied author tactfully communicates with the implied reader.⁴⁶
 - The author-narrator wants the reader to be pulled into the world of the text itself and then convincing them (winning them over) to his/her own *ideological narrator’s perspective*.
 - In the Gospel according to John the narrator has as a goal the persuasion of the reader into believing that Jesus is in fact the sent Son of God who brings Life (according to Jn 3:15–16; and 20:30–31); and to help the reader to associate and identify with this message (cf. Du Rand 1990:78).

1.11 Analytical Process: Exegetical Methodology

In any successful exegetical undertaking it is important to use different and appropriate or suitable methods to look at the possibilities of meaning for any

45 It is for exactly this reason that it is so difficult to establish the authorship of a text on the basis of its internal witness (Du Rand 1990:77).

46 In the Gospel according to John the implied reader cannot be distinguished from the fictional reader or listener (according to Du Rand 1990:13).

specific text. For example, Egger (1996:8) remarks: “To do justice to the varied aspects of New Testament texts, a varied set of methodological instruments is used in scholarly dealing with the New Testament”.⁴⁷ All relevant methods that help me as exegete to do better exegesis of the text will be applied in this work (see Lategan 1992:153–154). The exegetical approach that will be applied/used in this study functions within the broader framework of *grammatical, literary, social* and *historical* analysis and interpretation—thoroughly discussed in the works of Egger (1996), Fee (2002), Green (1995), Morgan and Barton (1988), Osborne (1991), Porter (2002), Schnelle (1998) and Van der Watt (2001). Though in this study the social-scientific model dominates, there will of course also be made use of other exegetical methods and instruments to help with a better understanding of the text.

1.12 Relevance of the Research?

1.12.1 *The Desire for Healing and Reconciliation in our Global Village*⁴⁸

Since the publication of David J. Bosch’s *Transforming Mission* (1991) Missiology has *inter alia* thought in terms of the following paradigms: mission as enculturation, deliverance/liberation, proclamation, dialogue, etc. According to Kim (2005:xv), in his book *Reconciling Mission: The Ministry of Healing and Reconciliation in the Church Worldwide* (2005), Robert Schreiter (2004) recently argued that mission as healing and reconciliation is taking the place of previous mission paradigms very quickly, especially within the current global situation in which we find ourselves (Kim 2005:xv).

Schreiter (2004)⁴⁹ gives a number of reasons why the need for healing and reconciliation is the greatest requirement in our current environment (See also Kok 2012a:231–232):⁵⁰

47 In the exegetical study of selected texts there will (*amongst others*) be made use of the exegetical schema by Van der Watt J.G., 1999, *Die tien stappe van Eksegese* [The ten steps of Exegesis] (1999), Unpublished lecture notes, Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria in combination with those of Du Toit (2009:120).

48 A lot of information in this section on the relevance of the research I have also presented in an article (Kok 2012a). Permission was given to use the information here again.

49 See also Schreiter (1998).

50 These points were also made in a recent article and the information appear there also (Kok 2012:231–232). The material is used here with permission from the journal.

- 1) There is a need for reconstruction and development of specific societies after long periods of totalitarian domination;
- 2) There is a need for previous communistic regimes to restore, represent and ‘re-imagine’ themselves in the context of economic and social globalisation and the development of ethnicity that had been under pressure for so long;
- 3) Worldwide we find a growing awareness of the hurt and the brokenness that resulted from the process of colonisation, and the need for healing from these stories of hurt and pain and humiliation (compare South Africa; Australia; New Zealand; and Zimbabwe);
- 4) There is the challenge of accomplishing unity in the context of a growing global cultural context, in the midst of a diversity of cultures that have to live and work together;
- 5) In the South-African context we find a growing awareness of healing and reconciliation, especially when remembering the worldwide focus on the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission “after the apartheid rule and the need for healing of the continent from the ravages of poverty, civil wars and pandemics such as HIV/AIDS” (Kim 2005:xvi);
- 6) The growing fundamentalistic faith groups associated with violence (see e.g. 11 September 2001; tension in Syria; unrest in Egypt; 2016 Paris and Brussels attacks);
- 7) In terms of predicting the future Schreiter (2004:11–15) says that conflict between the different age groups and generations will only increase. Schreiter argues that people live longer and that less children are being born—especially in Europe—and that at present there is conflict surrounding pension funds. He also draws attention to the reality of violence in Africa, especially surrounding the younger generation, which is becoming ever more distressing.

During my time of study in Germany and the Netherlands (2007–2013) I often heard from many scholars that they are worried about the so-called *Ausländer-Problem*. This problem has in itself many possibilities for conflict, for example the growing unease over a younger generation of foreigners who have not been thoroughly educated and therefore become unemployed. The world is very much aware of the immigration crisis (to Europe) and the threat of terrorism (cf. Paris attacks 2015; Brussels attack 2016, etc.). Some scholars as far back as in 1995 already warned against a possible revolution and conflict situation in Germany in the near future.⁵¹ Langguth (1995:139) argued that the

⁵¹ Johnson (1995: *ad loc*), in his review of Langguth's book, *In search of Security* (1995), argues that “Germany is the only country in the world where two major transformations

influx of foreigners from unstable countries could lead to possible conflict within Germany itself: "Massive waves of migration from unstable regions in the world could spill into the industrial nations of the West. The danger is that civil wars could be imported into Germany..." He also shows that, by 1995, it had been projected that the demand for oil would increase with 30% by 2010. He fears that "if energy sources got into the hands of anti-Western fundamentalists, it could create an economic crisis in the West" (Langguth 1995:139). The increasing growth of religious fundamentalism also bears great risk: "Other areas of possible future conflict in the region are a potential increase in nuclear proliferation, a decline in water supplies, and a resurgence of religious fundamentalism (both Islamic and Jewish)" (Langguth 1995:139). For this very reason there is an increasing demand for diversity management, conflict resolution, reconciliation, social cohesion, healing, restoration and peace.

As a former board member of Kempbisa in South Africa, an organisation striving for the transformation of the city through unity in the church over cultural and denominational boundaries, I often had dealings with church leaders and congregants from Tembisa—a Black suburb. These encounters made it clear to me that there exists a growing need for cooperation over cultural and denominational boundaries. As a part of Kempbisa's activities yearly 'Healing and Reconciliation' workshops were organised and held in an attempt to address the 'pain' and 'hurt' of the 'apartheid' past. In a conference on 'cross-cultural facilitation', led by the American organisation *Equip* in 2006, we identified specific 'Giants' that stand in the way of 'unity', 'healing', and 'reconciliation'. One of these giants is the 'pain' that originates from South Africa's past. It appears that, in the collective South African psyche, remnants of the pain and discomfort caused by the past are still to be found in the social psyche of her people; meaning that a very long road to healing must still be walked before we can really become a nation of national unity in the midst of diversity (Jansen 2009:1–23; 201–231). In subsequent empirical research I (Kok 2016) have found that South Africans are drawing stronger social and ethnic boundaries and that the rainbow nation dream was not that successful after all.

are taking place at the same time: a process of modernization in the west and a transition from command economy to free market economy in the east. In this work, Langguth highlights the dramatic social and political changes occurring in east and West Germany. He concludes that the increasingly complex European political and social landscape and the new diversity of lifestyles in Germany have raised levels of insecurity among individual Germans. Moreover, the end of the bipolar world, with its rigid political, social, and economic structures, is requiring Germans—particularly German youth—to adjust their political and philosophical positions. This important work will be of interest to scholars and students of Germany and the contemporary European scene".

- Against the backdrop of the South African context this study is relevant because of the whole issue and lively debate in the Medical sector surrounding traditional healers and their demand to be given the same status as physicians. This debate is a reflection of the tension inherent in the contact between the Western Bio-medical paradigm and Traditional cultures' health care systems.
- When we thus want to discuss the Biblical perspective on 'sickness' and 'healing' meaningfully we have to take into account that the subject's own preconceptions have a significant influence on the process of interpretation. Therefore this study is of further relevance for the South African context, as it can illuminate the hermeneutic process of interpretation meaningfully; especially against the backdrop of 'reading the Bible in Africa' and the current AIDS pandemic.⁵²
- South Africa currently finds itself in a context of crisis and disorientation, which can be seen in the incredible violence and the reality of crime in the country. The economic state in South Africa, with rising inflation and price tendencies worsening the broken reality in the country, along with the ever-increasing gap between rich and poor, also presents a need to reflect upon healing, restoration and reconciliation. The reality of conflict in South Africa, as evident in (for example) the Xenophobic violence (May/June 2008) necessitates further reflection on the Biblical perspective of the church's role in the process of healing and restoration. The church's prophetic voice must especially be heard again on God's passion and heart for restoration. *The Gospel message is in essence a message of restoration, a message of re-creation, a message of multi-dimensional healing, the re-creation of qualitative possibilities for life in the atmosphere and context of God's love ...*

According to Philip Jenkins (2011) the gravity of Christianity is shifting south, to Africa and Asia. Some would go as far as to say that "A profound socio-religious revolution is taking place that is perhaps more significant than the transition between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance" (Kok 2012:227). In the next four decades, according to Jenkins, Africa will have more Christians than ever. He and others predict that by 2050, 72% of all Christians will live in Africa, Asia and Latin America (Jenkins 2011: *ad loc*). Wilkens (2011:1) observes that in Africa, with its rapid spread of Christianity, healing plays an important role:

Religious healing is an even stronger counterpart to conventional medicine in non-Western countries. Healing is amongst the most visible

⁵² Cf. Combrink (1986).

elements of Christianity in modern Tanzania. Healing prayers are advertised on the streets, in the newspapers, on the radio and on TV. Exorcisms are among the most popular features in radio ads so that he screams of the possessed and the shouts of the healers have become a ubiquitous sound in the cities. . . . [H]ealing has turned out to be one of the most attractive elements in its missionary outreach . . .

WILKENS 2011:1

Thus, in my opinion, the theme of 'healing' and 'restoration' is very relevant for our current context, especially on the African continent. This study can, from within the perspective of the New Testament, make a valuable contribution.

1.13 The Course of the Research Process

In order to be able to reach the goals of this hypothesis, the research process will have to progress as follows:

- In the following section an exegetical study of the 'healing narratives' in John is undertaken.
 - In Chapter 2 the background and introduction to the exegesis is discussed.
 - In Chapter 3 an exegetical study of John 4:43–54 is undertaken.
 - In Chapter 4 the 'healing narrative' in John 5:1–9 is studied.
 - In Chapter 5 the 'healing narrative' in John 9:1–41 is studied.
 - In Chapter 6 the 'healing narrative' in John 11:1–42 is the focus of study.
- In Chapter 7 John's understanding of 'spiritual healing' is evaluated. After this the reason for viewing the interaction between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4:1–42 as a 'healing narrative' is argued.
- In Chapter 8 the meaning of the 'death' and 'resurrection' of Jesus is discussed. It will be argued that the resurrection should be viewed as the central and cumulative 'healing act' of (and sign in) the Gospel of John.

Background and Orientation

In this second section of the work an exegetical study of a few selected/identified texts that involve ‘brokenness’ (‘sickness’) and ‘restoration’ (‘healing’) is conducted. In order to be able to establish what ‘sickness’ meant in the ancient Mediterranean (Biblical) context, a word study of the ‘sickness semantic’ in the Bible has to be done. In the end exegesis will be done on the texts in John which contain this semantic concept.

2.1 The Lexical Meaning of the Lexemes

2.1.1 *The Semantic Meaning of Sickness and Health*

For the sake of clarity a short summary will be given of the results of Louw and Nida’s (1988) research. Louw and Nida (1988: *ad loc*) group the concept “sickness” in the semantic domain “I” under “Sickness, Disease, Weakness” (23.142–23.184); and the term “health” in the semantic domain “H” under “Health, Vigour, Strength” (23.129–23.141).¹

It seems as if Louw and Nida, along with many other scholars, refer especially to the *loss of functionality* that usually occurs when they are defining sickness in their dictionaries—in other words, their emphasis falls more on the ‘doing’ dimension (according to 23.1.7) than on the ‘being’ dimension. Pilch (2000:4–17) does differentiate between these two dimensions (i.e. between ‘being’ and ‘doing’), going on to show that it is indeed modern Western ideology that emphasises the interpretation of sickness and its implications/consequences against the backdrop of a loss in functioning (‘doing’); and which would therefore never associate a sickness like leprosy with socio-religious unholy/impurity (i.e. ‘being’) in our modern context (according to Pilch 2000:6–7). Social-scientific studies—like those of Malina (1995; 1996); Malina and Neyrey (1991); and others like Seybold and Müller (1978)—refer to the fact that, in the ancient Mediterranean context, illnesses like leprosy were not seen as only a loss related to ‘doing’ but also as having negative socio-religious implications, thus sickness also contaminated an individual in his/her very ‘being’.

1 In the original Afrikaans version of this book (Kok 2008:41–47) I provided the overview of Louw and Nida in detail and indicated this point more clearly. Please consult Louw and Nida (1989: *ad loc*).

Seybold and Müller (1978), for example, remark (in terms of the ‘being’ dimension) that: “*Sollte ein Kranker geheilt werden, so muss der Priester den Geheilten danach ausdrücklich für rein erklären. Erst dann darf er sich wieder normal in menschlicher Gesellschaft aufhalten*”. Neyrey (1991:285) agrees, also accentuating the fact that sick people were not seen as ‘whole’ and ‘holy/pure’—“those with bodily defects such as the lame, the blind, and the deaf are lacking wholeness according to Leviticus 21:16–20. Lacking bodily wholeness, they lack holiness. Such ‘broken people’ may not be priests nor may they bring offerings into the holy temple” (also according to Milgrom 1991:1001). Other scholars, like Newman (1993:107), declare the meaning of leprosy in the following way (without discussing the socio-religious or “being” implications thereof):

- λείψ, ἰδος *flake, (fish)scale*
- λέπρα, ας *leprosy, skin disease*
- λεπρός, οὐ *leper, a man with a skin disease*

Others, like Arndt, Gingrich, Danker and Bauer (1996), give the following information regarding “leprosy” (λέπρα, ας, ἡ): “There is abundant evidence that not all the תִּצְרָח (cf. Lv 13 and 14) and λέπρα of the Bible is true *leprosy* caused by Hansen’s bacillus as known in modern times; indeed, there are many (see Gramberg and Cochrane below) who hold that Hansen’s disease was unknown in biblical times, or known by a different name than leprosy. λέπρα in the LXX and in the New Testament probably refers to such skin diseases as psoriasis, lupus, ringworm, and favus”.

It thus seems to me that Arndt, Gingrich, Danker and Bauer (1996) also do not take the socio-religious dimension of sickness seriously enough in their work. This becomes even clearer when looking at their definition for ‘sickness (ἀσθενέω)’:

1. Literally a. of bodily weakness *be sick* b. of weakness of any kind . . .
2. Figuratively of religious and moral weakness . . . Romans 14:2; 1 Corinthians 8:11f.; 2 Clement 17:2. With σκανδαλίζεσθαι Romans 14:21 v.l.; ἄ. τῇ πίστει *be weak in faith* 4:19; 14:1 (i.e. over-scrupulous). Generally of faint-heartedness and fearfulness 2 Corinthians 11:29.
3. *be weak economically, be in need* . . .

This reminds me of the risk/danger present in ethnocentric interpretations of ‘sickness’ or ‘illness’ without including the cultural dimension of sickness in the definition and discussion thereof. That said, we can still agree with Louw and Nida’s (1989: *ad loc*) statement that most sickness/illnesses do imply a loss

of possibilities for life to a greater or lesser degree. Especially when noting that, in their discussion of the terms for ‘healing’ or ‘health’, they do discuss the cultic dimension of “healing”—by implication also inherently giving insight into the socio-religious implications of the sickness/illnesses (according to 23.137).

Even so, there does seem to be a gap in Louw and Nida’s description—in the sense that the Johannine concept of ‘healing’ is not taken into account in its entirety. For, in their Western-orientated reading of the text they possibly didn’t realise the importance of this element. In John ‘healing’ is directly linked to Jesus’ capability to give life. Jesus does not only heal biologically and socio-religiously, but also eschatologically; the implication being that the term ‘healing’ in John also has a soteriological dimension, in the sense that it is coupled with important soteriological values like eternal life and reconciliation (both vertically and horizontally). The healing acts of Jesus, together with Jesus’ restoration/resurrection from the dead, are thus constantly realised against the backdrop of the words that Jesus spoke throughout the Gospel narrative. The writer, in a manner of speaking, paints the background canvas and decor beforehand and then lets the healing scene(s) take place/play out in front of this specific decor/canvas. Consequently, the big question becomes: what is the connection between the decor/canvas and the acts of healing? As far as I can gather, the connection lies in the fact that all of the different canvasses have ‘life’ as topic (see e.g. Jn 1:4; 3:16; and 20:30–31). Life is the opposite of death; and death is the worst form of brokenness—therefore death stands in contrast with the decor, much like a black object would stand in contrast to a white background. Thus the relation/connection between the decor and the acts of healing is both creative and descriptive. Creative in the sense that it creates the possibility for new life and restoration, realised in John in the cumulative restorative act—the resurrection. At the same time it is descriptive of that which has already been re-created—life ‘already’ being actualised with Jesus’ arrival on earth (according to Jn 5:24). In this way it becomes possible to see the relation/connection between the decor and the healing acts in that all of them eventually lead up to everything that Jesus alone has to offer, namely Life. For this reason ‘Life’ as categorical word should also feature in something like Louw and Nida’s semantic discussion of ‘healing’. For ancient people, and also for Africans (cf. Ubuntu),² there is a relationship between restorative justice,

2 See <<http://www.drfranklipman.com/archbishop-desmond-tutu/>> accessed on 15 April 2016. In this section an interview with Archbishop Desmond Tutu was held by Dr. Frank Lipman. In this interview Tutu explains the philosophy of Ubuntu and the relationship between restorative justice, forgiveness, healing and reconciliation. In Jewish thought there is also a relationship between conversion, forgiveness, reconciliation and healing (cf. 2 Chr 7:14).

forgiveness, 'healing' and 'reconciliation'.³ Below I will argue that it was also the case in ancient Jewish thought (cf. 2 Chr 7:14; Jn 12:40). Conversion related to restorative justice and healing. Louw and Nida misses this important dimensions in their dictionary.

2.2 The Role of Signs/Miracles in John

The Gospel of John describes seven miracles or signs (σημεία), which, according to Beasley-Murray (1989:45), is the Jewish number symbolising perfection (cf. Brown 1966:525–532; Du Rand 1990:24–25; Köstenberger 2004:52; Stibbe 1991:22–36; and Carson 1991:661):

1. Jesus turns water into wine (Jn 2:1–11);
2. The healing of the royal official's son (Jn 4:46–54);
3. The healing of the lame man at Bethesda (Jn 5:1–18);
4. Jesus multiplies the loaves (Jn 6:1–15);
5. Jesus walks on water/the Sea of Galilee (Jn 6:16–21);
6. Jesus heals the blind man (Jn 9:1–41); and
7. Jesus resurrects Lazarus (Jn 11:1–44).

In the Gospel of John the miracles Jesus does are described as 'signs' (σημεία). In the Synoptic Gospels they are described as 'powerful/miraculous works' (δύναμις). Brown (1966:526) is of the opinion that the best approach to understanding the function of these 'signs' in John is to be found in examining the way in which these words are used in John.

Now, in John, Jesus himself refers to these things as 'works' 17 times⁴ (and only in Jn 7:3 does another person refer to these things as 'works'). Other characters in the Gospel, as well as the narrator/redactor, refer to these miraculous deeds as 'signs' (a term which Jesus never uses himself when referring to

3 See Anderson (2014:221, 375–376, 378, 387) for the relationship between conversion, restoration, forgiveness and healing and God's vision for humanity (cf. Psalm 32:1–2; Rev 22:1–5). For forgiveness and reconciliation, see Anderson (2014:49, 68–69). Anderson (2014:149) correctly points out that unlike the Synoptics John omits the themes of Jesus and forgiveness. However, this does not mean that these themes are not implicitly present in John's theology (See Anderson 2014:239 and 342 for a discussion on forgiveness and reconciliation).

4 The term σημεῖα occurs 17 times in Jn:2:11, 18, 23; 3:2; 4:48, 54; 6:2, 14, 26, 30; 7:31; 9:16; 10:41; 11:47; 12:18, 37; and 20:30. In the following context the reference is to works: Jn 4:34; 5:17, 20, 36; 6:28, 29, 30; 7:3, 7, 21; 8:39; 9:3; 9:4; 10:25, 32, 33, 37, 38; 14:10, 11, 12; 15:24; and 17:4.

his miraculous deeds) (Brown 1966:526). It is interesting to note that, in John, Jesus' words/teachings are also known as 'works' (cf. Jn 14:10). In John, there also exists a total continuity/correlation between the 'works of the Son' and the 'works of the Father' (cf. Jn 5:36; 9:3; 10:32, 37ff.; and 14:10; cf. Barrett 1955:63). So, in John, the miraculous works/deeds and the words of Jesus are seen as two sides of the same coin. This close connection is illustrated in the narrative by the fact that a discourse often follows a miracle/sign (Brown 1966:527; cf. Barrett 1955:62–65).

According to Rengstorf in Kittel, Friedrich and Bromiley (1995, [c1985]:1020) the word *σημεῖα* entails the following denotative (*distinctive*) aspects in John:

In both John and Revelation *sēmeíon* takes over the role of *dýnamis* in the Synoptics. Johannine *sēmeía* are acts related to him who does them (Jn 3:2). Their quality derives from the quality of their author (Jn 9:16). Thus the beast, too, performs great signs, but these lead into idolatry (Rv 13:13ff.). The many signs of Jesus are distinctly miraculous (Jn 2:23; 3:2; 11:47; and 12:37), but they bear a messianic character (Jn 2:11; 4:54; 6:14) inasmuch as they put an end to disease and want. John does not refer to the curing of lepers or to exorcisms; he mentions *sēmeía* that seem designed to present Jesus as the Messiah. b. John never calls a saying of Jesus a *sēmeíon*. c. It is mostly the author (Jn 2:11, 23, etc.) or others (Jn 3:2; 7:31; 9:16) who use the term *sēmeíon*, Jesus himself only in John 6:26. In John, as distinct from the Synoptics, Acts, or the surrounding world, the term is a key one in theological interpretation.

RENGSTORF IN KITTEL, FRIEDRICH AND BROMILEY 1985:1020

Brown (1966:526) is of the opinion that "John does not speak much of the reign of the kingdom of God, and therefore does not present the miracles as acts of power (*dýnamis*) helping to establish the kingdom". In the Gospel of John we thus find a whole other function for the miracle narratives: they have a primarily symbolic (i.e. 'pregnant' act, reflecting a greater reality, bringing to mind rich content) meaning and function, since they reflect the true identity of the Son (according to Jn 20:30–31). Howard (2001:174) supports this, remarking that "the spiritual symbolism of the 'sign', therefore, is of much greater importance than the actual material effect of the action, which seems to be a direct consequence of John's incarnational theology".

According to some scholars, the word (*σημεῖα*), also plays a role in the long history of Israel's prophetic tradition (Beasley-Murray 1989:45). For example, it is used to describe both natural and supernatural happenings which legitimated the words/message of a prophet (see e.g. Ex 4:1–8; and 1 Sm 10:1–9).

In this sense the ‘signs’ in John are ‘revelatory signs’—reflecting the fact that God is present in Christ (see Barrett 1955:63). Beasley-Murray (1989:46) is also of the opinion that the σημεῖα in John stand in revelatory relation to the miraculous revelation of the kingdom:

The signs of Jesus are powerful manifestations of the kingdom in the earthly ministry of Jesus, but they are also anticipations of the ‘greater things’ (Jn 14:12) of the kingdom that come yet more decisively in his own greater works—in his death and resurrection, the sending of the Holy Spirit, and the final coming of the Lord for last judgment and resurrection.

BEASLEY-MURRAY 1989:46

These σημεῖα naturally have to be understood against the background of John’s purpose with the presentation thereof (See Hwang 2004; and Salier 2004).

In John 20:30–31 the purpose of the Gospel is explained as such by its writer: “Πολλὰ μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄλλα σημεῖα ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐνώπιον τῶν μαθητῶν [αὐτοῦ], ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ· 31 ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται ἵνα πιστεύ[ς] ᾗτε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ.”⁵ John thus explains that there were many other signs and wonders⁶ which he could have mentioned in order to fulfil his purpose to enable people to believe that Jesus was God’s Son that He sent to earth, and would receive eternal life because of this faith (Köstenberger 2004:581; and Ridderbos 1997:650).⁷ So the author of John rather made a selection out of all the stories available to him in order to narrate the Gospel of Jesus fulfil with this specific purpose in mind (Van der Watt 2000b: *ad loc*; Carson 1991:660–661; also see Keener 2003:1213, 1221).⁸ Howard (2001:174) summarises what we have been discussing very succinctly:

5 Translation of John 20:30–31: “³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of [his] disciples that are not written in this book. ³¹But these are written that you may [come to] believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name”.

6 See Davids (1997:1903–1905) on signs and wonders in the *Dictionary of the later New Testament and its developments*.

7 Bultmann (1971:697–698) draws attention to the fact that this type of summary also occurs in both secular and inter-testamental documents (according to Sir 43:27; 1 Macc 9:22).

8 Keener (2003:1221) quotes other parts of the Johannine corpus where summaries/conclusions are reached, followed by additional material (according to Jn 12:36–37; 1 Jn 5:13; and Rv 22:5).

The emphasis in John, in fact, is on the words of Jesus to which the ‘works’ or ‘signs’ point as symbolic or prophetic actions, designed to convey the reality of the message. The events are never recorded as ‘wonders’ (τέρατα) as they are in the synoptics, but always as ‘signs’ (σημεῖα), events which illuminate faith...

HOWARD 2001:174

Hence, John’s ‘miracle’ narratives are ‘signs’ that point to a larger (true) ‘reality’, the reality that Jesus is indeed the Son of God (see Du Rand 1990:25). This also suggests that these healings are not told of for the sake of the ‘healing’ itself, but for the sake of the ‘bigger truth’ to which they point (see Thompson 1992:379). The author’s objective is to lead the reader of the text to ‘faith’, thus also giving the gift of life to new believers.

According to Beasley-Murray (1989: *ad loc*), these miraculous acts/deeds are always presented in a stylised way—“the general procedure of the evangelist is to recall a sign, or two signs, and to follow on with teaching that explains the significance of the sign(s)” (according also to Brown 1966:527). Therefore, in the context of the ‘healing acts’ that will be the subject of this book, it is important to always keep the bigger context within which these healing acts (miracles/signs) take place, in mind—the miracle always stands in service of the greater theological truth that the writer wants to accentuate (see Van Tilborg 1996:117).⁹ For this reason the ‘discourses’ surrounding the healing acts, will also be examined when studying the healing narrative.¹⁰ Thompson (1992:379) makes the following important remark:

‘Sign’ need not, in and of itself mean ‘miracle’. In the Old Testament prophetic acts that signalled the coming of some future act of God (such as

9 For a historic overview of the theme *semeia*, see David’s (1997:1093–1095); and Williams (1989).

10 See Brown (1966:529–531) for a discussion of the function of signs in John. According to him, there are similarities in the way that John uses the term *semeion* and its use in the Old Testament prophetic tradition. In the context of the Old Testament the prophet did wonders or signs in order to graphically illustrate that God’s judgement and his intervention is now the most prominent (according to Is 20:3; Jr 13:1–11; and Ezk 12:1–16). This type of prophetic action had as goal to serve as a sign through which the prophet’s message (and God’s will) was revealed to the people. In the realised eschatological theology of John these signs do not simply point to God’s future intervention; but should be understood as the present intervention of God into the life of his people and the world. In this context, physical life and sight are signs and gifts which primarily anticipate spiritual life and sight.

judgment) were called “signs”. Thus some scholars think that in John the signs include the healings, feeding of the five thousand and changing of the water into wine- in short, the miracles- but possibly other acts as well, such as the Temple cleansing or even the resurrection of Jesus himself.

THOMPSON 1992:379

Later in this work it will be argued that the resurrection of Jesus can indeed be seen/viewed as a σημεῖα (according also to Carson 1991:661). One thing that all the different signs have in common is that they illustrate that Jesus is the ‘source of life’ (according to Jn 1:4), and that he also has the power to be able to give ‘spiritual life’ (which is, of course, embedded into the sphere of soteriology).¹¹ For this reason Thompson (1992:379) is correct when he proposes that “a sign is thus properly understood when it is seen as pointing to God’s work through the person of Jesus to effect salvation”.

2.3 Selected Healing Texts from John

According to Pilch (2000:119) there are only three ‘healing narratives’ to be found in John: (1) the healing of the royal official’s son in John 4:46–54; (2) the healing of the lame/paralysed man in John 5:1–20; and (3) the healing of the blind man in John 9:1–41 (according also to Martyn 2003:32).¹² Other scholars—like Howard (2001:185–190)—convincingly argue for a broader understanding of the term ‘sickness’ or ‘illness’, especially when keeping in mind as background information the differentiation between the ‘curing of a disease’ and the ‘healing of an illness’ (according to Pilch 2000, as discussed above). Wilkinson (1998:5) argues in just this way: “Another aspect of our use of the word healing in this book is that we include three categories of the restoration to normality within this scope. These are healing of the body, the casting out of demons and the raising of the dead. Although they are separate categories, they are all examples of the restoration of human beings to that wholeness of being which we call health”.

The approach in this present book, purposefully focus on a broader understanding of ‘sickness’ or ‘brokenness’ and the ‘healing’ or ‘restoration’ thereof more than the mere biological curing of disease are in play. In the exegesis of the different narratives pertaining to ‘sickness’, and of the narrative on the death and resurrection (i.e. restoration to life) of Lazarus, it will be argued that

¹¹ See Turner (1976).

¹² See Painter (1986:31–61).

these narratives should also be seen within the context of John's 'healing narratives or signs'.

The following 'healing narratives' in John are relevant for this exegetical study:

TABLE 3 *Identified texts on healing*

Text	Description
1. John 4:46–54	The royal official's son
2. John 5:1–17	The lame/paralysed man
3. John 9:1–41	The man who was born blind
4. John 11:1–44	The resurrection of Lazarus
5. John 18–20	The death and resurrection of Jesus ¹³

2.4 The Macro Structure of the Gospel of John

Before exegesis can be done on any one text, the macro structure of the book as a whole must first be identified; as any one text is of course embedded into a bigger context and storyline (Du Rand 1990:97). This means that the meaning of any individual text which is to be studied is determined by the specific context within which it is positioned (according to Louw 1976:56–59).

Within the book, several different divisions/groupings of text exist, each with its own reasoning (principles/grounds);¹⁴ which is very dependent upon

13 In the process of exegesis John 4:43–54, 5:1–9, and 9:1–12 are seen as the primary texts, because they are directly connected to healing. It is argued that certain 'sicknesses' can be linked to the Johannine concepts 'life' and 'death'. Then it is argued that the resurrection of Lazarus should also be seen within this category of healing acts; especially when keeping in mind that, in John 11, Jesus himself expands the term/idea by including resurrection from death. In this way the connection between the resurrection of Lazarus and the eventual resurrection of Jesus himself is made. It will be argued that the term 'resurrection' can also be connected to the Johannine concepts 'life' and 'death'; which would mean that it too can be seen as part of the Johannine category of healing acts.

14 Du Rand (1990:97) draws attention to the detailed study done by Mlkuzhyil (1987)—a study of no less than 24 different ways of division/grouping of the Gospel text.

the philosophy and the technique used for the particular division/grouping.¹⁵ These principles take into account the build-up of both the content and the more formal aspects of the Gospel (Du Rand 1990:97).

For the purposes of this work I am making a choice for the division made by Beasley-Murray (1987). His approach assists me as exegete to understand both the line of thought and the structure of the book. In my opinion it is the most obvious grouping/division, a grouping/division that is also presented by the Gospel itself.¹⁶ But in some places I do differ from his division. For example, I am of the opinion that it is not theologically accurate to embed the whole of John 13:1–20:31 within the same theological unit (Beasley-Murray does embed this whole section under the same heading—“the private ministry of Jesus to his ‘own’”), precisely because the cross narrative has such a unique theological focus within the Gospel as a whole. Thus, I feel it warrants placing John 13:11–17:26 into its own section; and for this reason, differing from Beasley-Murray, I have classified/grouped John 18:1–20:31 under the heading *passion narrative*.

THEME: That you may [come to] believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this faith you may have life in his name (Jn 20:30–31).

I. 1:1–18	Prologue
II. 1:19–12:50	Public ministry and miracles/signs of Jesus
A. 1:19–51	<i>Witnessing about Jesus</i> : John the Baptist and the first disciples
B. 2:1–4:42	Two signs of a new order: water into wine, the purification of the Temple. Nicodemus discourse (see Chapter 3), connected to the Temple; Samaritan discourse (see Chapter 4), connected to the wine

15 Barrett (1976:11) correctly remarks that “the structure of the Gospel is simple in outline, complicated in detail”. Barrett (1976:11) divides/groups the Gospel in exactly the same way as Beasley-Murray. (1987), which is a division into five definite sections: 1:1–18; 1:19–12:50; 13:1–17:26; 18:1–20:31; and 21:1–25.

16 See Du Rand (1990:97) for a similar division/grouping and argumentation. He accentuates the fact that the Gospel of John shows certain seams, because of its possible origin history, its redactional reworkings, and its literary narration. These seams have to be taken into account when researching both the content and the formal aspects of the Gospel (Du Rand 1990:100).

C. 4:43–5:47	Jesus intervenes and mediates both life and judgement
D. 6:1–71	Jesus is the bread of life
E. 7:1–8:59	Jesus is the water and the ‘light’ of life
F. 9:1–10:42	Jesus is the ‘light’ and the shepherd
G. 11:1–54	Jesus is the resurrection and the life
H. 11:55–12:50	Jesus is the king of life, triumphing over death
III. 13:1–17–26	Private ministry of Jesus to his “own”
A. 13:7–17:26	<i>Farewell/goodbye discourse</i> ¹⁷
1. 13:1–30	Washing of feet
2. 13:31–14:31	The leaving and return of Jesus
3. 15:1–17	Jesus as the true vine
4. 15:18–16:4a	The world will hate the church
5. 16:4b–33	The joy that overcomes tribulation
6. 17:1–26	Jesus prays for his “own”, and for those that will still come to believe
IV. 18:1–20:31	The passion narrative
A. 18:7–20:31	<i>The “hour” of his death is at hand; his death and resurrection</i>
1. 18:1–11	Jesus’ arrest
2. 18:12–27	Jesus before the High Priest
3. 18:28–19:16a	Jesus before Pilate
4. 19:16b–42	His suffering, death, and burial
5. 20:1–31	His resurrection and appearances
V. 21:1–25	Epilogue: More appearances, the mission of the Church and the leading or main apostles
A. 21:1–14	Jesus appears to the seven disciples
B. 21:15–19	Jesus and Peter
C. 21:20–25	Jesus and the beloved disciple

(Macro-structure of John adapted from Beasley-Murray)

2.4.1 *Commentary on the Macro Structure*

According to the macro structure all the miracles/signs are placed within the public ministry of Jesus (Jn 1–12) to the world (Köstenberger 2004:582).

¹⁷ See Tolmie (1995).

It is interesting to note that no 'healing acts' are to be found in John 13:1–20:31, almost as if restoration, and wholeness (health) is already present in the 'Jesus-group'—with the exception of Judas. From the macro structure it already becomes clear that 'qualitative life possibilities' (or 'Life') are realised in the presence of Jesus. And, though Jesus himself experiences 'brokenness' in John 18:1–20:31, he is 'restored' to 'wholeness' and 'life possibilities' through his 'resurrection'—the culmination of the Gospel. In agreement with Carson (1991:661), I see Jesus' death and resurrection as part and parcel of the Johannine *semeia*, illustrating that Jesus is indeed the One that gives Life (see Jn 20:20–31; cf. Van Belle 2006).¹⁸ This argument will be further developed in the chapter about the resurrection as a healing act.

2.5 The Background and Conceptual Framework for Reading the Johannine Text

2.5.1 Introduction

The background question will not be worked out in depth here because (1) it is not the focus of this work, and (2) it is not central to the argumentation of the thesis as put forth in this work (please see Barrett 1978; Beasley-Murray 1989; Brown 1979; Bultmann 1971; Carson 1991; Culpepper 1975; Dodd 1953; Du Rand 1990:36–60; Gnllka 1983; Haenchen 1980; Käsemann 1968; Köstenberger 2004; Lincoln 2005; Martyn 1968 and 2003; Thyen 2005; Schnackenburg 1982; and Witherington 1995:11–40 on this subject).

Even so, it is still important to study and sketch the socio-religious and cultural contexts within which the Gospel could and should be read. It is important because it will enable us to interpret these 'healing narratives' against their specific backdrop/contexts. The specific socio-religious and cultural contexts within which the healing acts and the construed healing narratives were realised, also have a significant influence/impact on the current (meaningful) interpretation of these healing narratives (see Joubert 2006:101). Wittgenstein (1958:199) traces an inevitable connection between language and culture as well as with the social conventions, norms, and unspoken rules and regulations that have to do with cultural habits (*customs*). For the 'symbolic *universum*' of the writer, his/her cultural context, and his/her audience has a significant influence on the way in which the writer textually presents the healing narrative. Wittgenstein (1958:198) remarks: "Any interpretation still hangs in the air

18 Beasley-Murray (1999:387) goes as far as to argue that the post-resurrection appearances can and should also be seen as *semeia*.

along with what it interprets, and cannot give it any support. Interpretations by themselves do not determine meaning.” This is (of course) correct. It also relates to the relationship between a specific issue or event and the interpretation of those issues/events from within a person’s specific context and worldview (or frame of reference). The question thus becomes “what is the nature of the relationship between the original events and the interpretation of those events?” In line with this, Derrida (1981) often refers to the fact that “meaning is established only provisionally by the speaker or hearer” (in Joubert 2006:102). For Derrida, it is important to take the tentativeness surrounding the construction of meaning, into consideration. In other words, the formation of meaning can and must—by implication—be ‘delayed’. Communication and meaning are realised within the speech act; which is in turn embedded within certain/specific socio-cultural and historical contexts. It is clear that context has a very significant influence on the type of narrative and its interpretation. For example, context influences the healing narratives in John and the result which the writer has in mind with the narration of these events. That is why it is so important to think about and to identify who the possible original historical readers of the text were, what their chosen conceptual worldview was, and what the possible result of the narration of these healing acts could have been (against this backdrop). It is only after completion of this process that we can move on to the current interpretation of these ‘healing narratives’ through the identification of new connections/relations, opening up new possibilities for understanding.

2.5.2 *Background and Conceptual Framework*

In my opinion the text developed from foundational traditions based in/originating from Jerusalem (see also Beasley-Murray 1987:1xxx1, following in the footsteps of Manson 1946–47), finding its final literary form in Ephesus (compare Salier 2004:11; also see Barrett 1978:128–134 and Brown 1966:ciii–civ) long years after 70 CE (according to Martyn 1968; and 2003). Under the guidance of the so-called beloved disciple (Culpepper 1975), and later as a product of the Johannine school of thought (see Brown 1977; Culpepper 1975; Käsemann 1968; and Martyn 1968)—the author built upon the Jesus tradition (Du Rand 1990), and against the conceptual background of Judaism (according to Martyn 2003; and Lozada & Thatcher 2006). I accept that the text was originally meant for a diverse audience that could have included: (1) the unbelieving Jews in Palestine (according to Van Unnik; Robinson; and Bassler 1981); (2) Jewish and Greek Christians living in the *diaspora* (see Brown 1979); (3) the Samaritans (according to Jn 4); or even (4) a specific Johannine community

(see Frey 1994a:262–263; Salier 2004:10–12; Koester 1996; Moloney 2002:35; and Edwards 2003:45).

But I also agree with Martyn (2003) and others such as Johnson (2006:83), who state that the Gospel of John has to be read within the conceptual world-view/framework of Judaism, based on the following: (1) the centrality of the Temple motive in John (according to Jn 2:13–25; also see Coloe 2001; and Kerr 2002:239–241); (2) seeing and portraying Jesus as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophesies and expectations (compare Jn 7:37–39 with Zch 14:8; Jl 3:18; Ezk 47:1–7, and Jn 19:34); (3) placing the Gospel against the ‘narrative backdrop’ of the different Jewish festivals (Johnson 2006:95; and Kerr 2002: also see chapter 7); (4) the usage of Jewish titles—like lamb of God (Jn 1:1–18), rabbi (Jn 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; and 11:8), Messiah, Son of God (Jn 1:32–34), king of Israel (Jn 1:9) for Jesus; and (5) Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem (according to Jn 12:12–15, compare with Zch 9:9; also see Koester 2003:19–20). Finally I agree with Johnson (2006:97) when he states that the writer of the Gospel of John was busy with the “intentional portrayal of Jesus within the framework of Judaism...”, therefore presenting “Jesus as the true fulfilment or correct interpretation of these symbols” (Johnson 2006:98). For this reason we can accept that “the thought world of the Gospel of John fits well within the context of interpretive variety within first-century Judaism” (Johnson 2006:99). This line of thought and interpretation is, also in step with the most current developments in Johannine research. As Salier (2004:8) rightly observes:

Research on the Fourth Gospel has seen a considerable shift in focus concerning the sources of John’s thought. In the early part of this century the search was conducted for the conceptual background of the Fourth Gospel mainly in the Hellenistic world until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Since then the pendulum has swung markedly to seeing the conceptual background of the Fourth Gospel located within the world of Judaism.

SALIER 2004:8

Subsequently the healing narratives can (and should be) interpreted against the ‘narrative backdrop’ of the 1st century’s Temple-orientated Jewish symbolic *universum*, without denying the probability of a diverse audience (according to Koester 1996; Moloney 2002:35; and Edwards 2003:45).

Some scholars, like Frey (1994a:262–263), argue that one cannot think of the ancient world as functioning in watertight compartments, making it possible to use a homogenous lens. The simple fact is that even if one were to assume

that Judaism was the only/exclusive conceptual framework for the Gospel—Judaism as a single movement, was never homogenous. Frey (1994a) attempts to sensitise us to the fact that the Johannine text itself gives the indication that it had a diverse audience in mind. Consider for example the references to the Samaritans in John 4, to the Greeks in John 7 and 12, to the ‘other sheep’ (ἄλλα πρόβατα) of John 10:16, and to the multi-lingual proclamation of Jesus as king in John 19; to the detail given as to the geographic locations, like Jerusalem and Palestine (according to Jn 5:2; and 11:1, 18); as well as to the apparent ignorance pertaining to certain Jewish customs (see Jn 2:13, 7:2, and 10:22). These last details have led some scholars to the conclusion that John had a Gentile audience in mind (see Culpepper 1983:224–225; also according to Witherington 1995:34–35). In my opinion, Frey (1994a) is correct when he remarks that the Gospel of John has a diverse audience in mind, without this fact automatically precluding the possibility that John’s theological perspective is deeply rooted within the Jewish worldview and Jewish texts. Or, to put it differently, by accepting that Judaism creates/forms the conceptual framework of (and basis for) the Gospel, the possibility that the message was directed towards a diverse audience is not precluded. Or, as Salier (2004:14–15) puts it:

In order to ‘become’ the implied reader, the reader will have to take on a deep appreciation of this framework as expressed in the Gospel through its many allusions and specific references to the Scriptures of Israel. However, access is not denied on this account. The Gospel bridges the culture presupposed by the conceptual background of the Gospel and the broad world in front of the text.

SALIER 2004:14–15

What Salier says here is in step with the Gospel’s own words: the Gospel’s text makes it clear the σωτηρία ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν (Jn 4:22); yet ἡγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον (Jn 3:16); for this reason He sent Jesus as the ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου (Jn 4:42).¹⁹ The implication of the abovementioned being that the Johannine healing narratives will have to be read against the conceptual framework(s) of the 1st century’s Temple-orientated and the synagogue-orientated Judaism (according to the ἐξέβαλον αὐτὸν ἔξω in Jn 9:34–35, and ἀποσυνάγωγος in John 9:22; cf. Martyn 2003; also see Wengst 1981); but also against the framework of the Graeco-Roman world in the 1st century (according to Salier 2004;

19 Koester (1990).

also see Brown 1997:373–376).²⁰ The ‘healing acts’, as ‘σημεῖα’, are also to be read against the backdrop of John’s aim with the Gospel—neatly spelled out in John 20:30–31—that those who see the σημεῖα and believe the words of Jesus will come to faith.

20 See Brown’s (1997:373–376) introduction to the New Testament texts in his discussion of a hypothesis regarding background history.

The Healing of the Royal Official's Son: An Exegetical Study of John 4:43–54

Macro Analysis of John 4:43–54

3.1 The Positioning of this Text within the Context of the Gospel

John 4:43–54 is positioned within the bigger context of the grouping John 1:19–12:50—the section that deals with Jesus' public ministry and miracles.¹

Du Rand (1990:101) further places this pericope within the context of John 2:1–4:54 (also according to Moloney 1998:113–114; and Schnackenburg 1990:1.419) which, according to him, can be described or labelled as “*Jesus’ ministry from Cana to Cana: signs and conversations*” (see Carson 1991:237; Feuillet 1960:62–75). Köstenberger (2004:166) is of the opinion that the expression “δεύτερον σημεῖον” (second sign) in John 4:54 links the current pericope (Jn 4:43–54) to John 2:1–11, “thus constituting 2:1–4:5 as the first major unit in John’s narrative about Jesus” (Köstenberger 2004:166; also according to Moloney 1998:113–114; and Schnackenburg 1990:1.419).

Beasley-Murray (1987:xci; also according to Brown 1997:344; see Schnackenburg 1990:1.421)² positions this pericope within the context of that which,

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- 1 According to Culpepper (1983:91), who remarks on the development of the plot of the gospel: In John 4:1 and 3 mention is made of the growing opposition from the Pharisees. But, except for John 4:44’s (and according to Jn 1:11) mention of the opposition’s strong feelings, Jesus is sketched primarily positively in John 4—Jesus has (or makes) more disciples than John the Baptist (Jn 4:1), the Samaritans acknowledge him as the Christ and the Saviour of the world, Jesus is received heartily in Galilee (Jn 4:45), and he heals the royal officer’s son from a distance (Jn 4:46–54). The opposition of the Jews is here only in the beginning phase and functions only as a preview (reminder?) of things to come. Therefore, Culpepper (1983:91) argues that the first chapters of the Gospel of John contain a powerful “primacy effect”; that is, “they firmly establish the reader’s first impression of Jesus’ identity and mission”.
 - 2 Schnackenburg (1990:1.419–421; also according to Wilckens (1998:80) mentions that this text thematically (amongst other things) Jesus as a source of living water; meaning that the text forms a small climax in the bigger picture, in terms of Jesus’ revelations about himself in the confession of the people of Sychar that he is indeed the saviour of the world (according to Schnackenburg 1990:1.420). As Wilckens (1998:80) correctly remarks: “*Es kommt zu einem zweitägigen Aufenthalt Jesu in dieser samaritanischen Ortschaft Sychar, deren Bewohner zum Glauben an ihn kommen und ihn als den Heiland der Welt bekennen*”.

according to him, is happening in John 4:43–5:47—i.e. that Jesus is the One who mediates both 'Life' and 'Judgement'. Brown (1997:344) agrees with the above, remarking that:

To Nicodemus Jesus had spoken of a (life-giving) begetting/birth from above; to the Samaritan woman he had spoken of water springing up to eternal life; now he gives life to the royal official's son. This prepares for a 'key saying' in the next subdivision that the Son grants life to whomever he wishes (Jn 5:21).

BROWN 1997:344

But the theme of life is actually strongly developed from the very beginning of the Gospel. Already in the prologue³ (Jn 1:4, 12) the reader is made aware of the fact that Jesus' identity is directly linked with life (Jn 1:4; see Ridderbos 1997:38, 40), and that those who believe Him will be called children of God (Jn 1:12; see Brown 1966:11). In John 3 it is explained that those who believe are born again on a spiritual level (Jn 3:3, 5; see Morris 1995:198), which eventually results in everlasting life (according to Jn 3:16). Even in John 4 itself (according to Jn 4:10, 13, 14) Jesus offers qualitative heavenly life to the Samaritan woman (cf. Wengst 2000:167–169; Strachan 1946:151; and Thyen 2005:248–249). In John 4:43–54 Jesus heals the royal official's son, in this way giving him 'life' (Thyen 2005:292); and when the whole family comes to faith they also receive the qualitative 'spiritual life' that Jesus has brought to the world. In all of these contexts the 'miracles' function as denotative 'signs' that illustrate and emphasise the fact that Jesus is indeed the One who has brought 'life' to the world (cf. Jn 5:19–30).

The sign of the healing of the royal official's son—who had been at the brink of death—serves to illustrate and accentuate the fact that Jesus has the power to give 'life'. This 'life' that Jesus gives is defined as 'everlasting life' in the discourse that follows (Jn 5:24); and later as 'resurrection life' (Jn 5:21, 25–26, 28–29).⁴ The whole issue surrounding 'life' thus plays a very important role in these healing acts on a fundamental level. Thus the term 'life',⁵ as well

3 Cf. Harris (1994).

4 Beasley-Murray (1987:71) remarks elsewhere that: "As stated in the introduction to this section, we understand 4:43–5:47 as a connected whole, consisting of two 'signs', both healing miracles, and a discourse primarily on the theme of Jesus, the Mediator of Life and Judgement".

5 As will become clearer later on, the word life is found 47 times in this Gospel (as opposed to Mt [6×]; Mk [5]; and Luke [5]). Everything in John (in some way or another) is eventually about the cumulative possibilities for life within God's family—a possibility that Jesus has

as the 'life theology' in the Gospel, serve as basis for all of the 'healings' in the Gospel (cf. the narratives surrounding Nicodemus in Jn 3:1–21, the Samaritan woman in Jn 4:10, and the royal official's son in Jn 4:50). Brown (1966:118) accentuates the very important fact that this pericope has the same underlying theme as John 2:23–25, in the sense that it centres on/around the 'wrong' faith of those who believe/come to faith on the basis of the "miracles" that Jesus performs. In order to rectify this, Jesus had to explain to Nicodemus that he was the One coming from 'above' to give 'everlasting life'. This same theme—of 'correct faith'—is again found in John 4:44–45, where Jesus remarks that a prophet is never known (i.e. given recognition) in his own country (according to Jn 4:44).⁶ This however, seems to be in tension with John 4:45, where Jesus enters Galilee;⁷ and they receive him with open arms. But, if the text is read carefully, the underlying reason for their friendly welcome (ἐδέξαντο) becomes clear: the crowds had seen all the miracles/wonders that Jesus did at the festival in Jerusalem. They are thus amicably receiving him, not necessarily for who he is but rather for what he can do. In John this represents the 'wrong' understanding of who Jesus is and is based on an erroneous understanding of the exact nature of his actual function/role here on earth (according to Hwang 2004).

For this reason, Jesus' first reaction to the royal official's request for the healing of his son (Jn 4:47), was (Jn 4:48): Ἐάν μὴ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἴδῃτε, οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε.⁸ This demonstrates that Jesus has a problem with believers whose faith centres on/around the seeing of miracles and signs, and who would not have believed if they did not witness miracles and signs. Such believers do not understand who he (Jesus) really is; they are merely impressed by what he does. They do not understand his true identity, nature or his Godly ordained function/mission.

In closing and to summarise we can thus say that this text (Jn 4:43–54) thematically links with the previous miracle in Galilee in the sense that it also centres around the question and the contrast between 'miracle-centred faith' (faith on the basis of miracles/signs) and 'authentic faith' (faith in Jesus as the sent Son of God who brings life) (cf. to Witherington 1995:127; Brown 1966:194; and Schnackenburg 1968:464). This theme, 'life', plays a fundamentally

brought into the world (according to Jn 20:30–31). Also see Van der Watt (2000b) and (1986) for a very good study on 'life' in John (1986), as well as for the family metaphor functioning within the Gospel (2000b).

6 See Moloney (1978:185–213).

7 See Culpepper (1998:145).

8 Aland, Aland, Black, Martini, Metzger, & Wikgren (1993, c1979: *ad loc.*).

important role in the first few chapters of the Gospel. It is interesting to note how Jesus offers 'life' to Nicodemus (Jn 3:3,5), the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:10, 13–14) and the royal official (Jn 4:50, 53). All three of these conversations eventually lead to the acceptance of that which Jesus offers—'Eternal Life'. It is for this very reason that this part of the text is oftentimes called the summary of the Gospel. In John 1 and 2 Jesus is identified for who he is, and in John 3 and 4 this 'Life' (that which he is and that what he brings to the world) is offered to Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, and the royal official, respectively.

3.1.1 *An Analysis of the Build-up/Development of John 4:43–54:* *Discussion*⁹

According to an analysis¹⁰ of the underlying connections, line of thought, and the build-up (or development) of John 4:43–54 (but then—importantly—NOT traditional South African structural analysis), the text can be structured as follows (according to Hwang 2004:49–51):¹¹

TABLE 4 *Division/grouping of John 4:43–54*

Cluster	Colon	Theme
A	1	Jesus on the/his way to Galilee
B	2–5	The royal official's request/beseeching
C	6–8	Jesus heals the royal official's son
D	9–15	The royal official and his household come to faith
E	16	Reference to the second miracle/sign in Galilee

9 According to Hwang (2004:48–49), who did a very thorough narrative-critical study of this pericope.

10 See Addendum.

11 The analysis concerning the underlying relations of the different phrases, as well as the build-up and structural development of the text can be found in Kok (2008:495–469). Available online at <<http://upetd.up.ac.za/thesis/available/etd-11072008-105505/unrestricted/03back.pdf>>.

Cluster A (Colon 1): The word οὖν in Colon 1 marks the transition from the previous section (see Newman and Nida 1980:134). This colon is about Jesus' movement in a northerly direction to Galilee. The theme of the cluster is: *Jesus on the/his way to Galilee*.

Cluster B (Colon 2–5): This part of the text is sectioned off from the previous part because of the change of characters on/in the scene. Colon 2 introduces the royal official and gives him the stage, colon 3 refers to the temporal and spatial *setting*, colon 4 is made up of the royal official's request/beseeching (ἡρώτα), and colon 5 gives us the reason for the request (γὰρ ἀποθνήσκειν). The inter-relational semantics of this part of the text can thus be summarised as follows: colon 2 introduces the following colon with the introduction of the royal official; colon 3 functions in a subordinate qualifying relation to colon 4; which is the result of colon 5; representing a clear logical pattern. Thus, the main focus of the cluster is the request/beseeching of the royal official.

Cluster C (Colon 6–8): Colon 6 is separated from colon 5 by a shift in focus (or accentuation). In colon 6 Jesus is once again speaking when he reacts to the royal official's request from colon 4. In each of these cola the main verb (λέγω) is found, stimulating the reciprocal dialogue surrounding the miracle. For this reason the theme is: *Jesus heals the royal official's son*.

Cluster D (Colon 9–15): This section is differentiated from the previous parts because of the verb's grammatical time reference change—from *praesens indicative active* (λέγει) to *aoristus indicative active* (ἐπίστευσεν) in John 4:50. Furthermore, the dialogue also changes from a dialogue between Jesus and the royal official, to a dialogue between the royal official and his servants (household).

Internally this part of the text can be separated into three subsections: verses 10–12; 13–15; and 16. In the first section (colon 10–12) we find three verbs in the third person singular (ἐπίστευσεν; ἐπορεύετο;¹² ὑπήντησαν¹³). Colon 13–15 has different explicit structural markers (οὖν and ὥρᾳ); while colon 15 forms an *inclusio* with colon 9, as both centre around the faith (ἐπίστευσεν)¹⁴ of the royal official (according to Hwang 2004:50). In colon 9 to 11 we find successive/consecutive actions that are related to the royal official's faith in the words of Jesus, and his return to Cana on the way to see his son. Colon 12 contains the question of the royal official, colon 13 his servants' (households') answer to his questions, and colon 14 states the result of cola 12 and 13. The central idea in colon 14 is to be found in the *time* in which the healing took place (according

12 ἐπορεύετο (verb): Imperfektum, indicative, medium, 3rd person singular of πορεύομαι.

13 ὑπήντησαν (verb): Aoristus, indicative, active, 3rd person singular of ὑπαντάω.

14 ἐπίστευσεν (verb): Aoristus, indicative, active, 3rd person singular of πιστεύω.

to οὖν and ὥρα). Colon 15 is the result/consequence of the healing, as well as a repetition of colon 9, accentuating the progressive development of the royal official's faith that eventually led to his whole household coming to faith as well (ἐπίστευσεν αὐτὸς καὶ ἡ οἰκία αὐτοῦ ὅλη). The theme for this section is thus summarised as: *The royal official and his household come to faith.*

Cluster E (Colon 16): The word δὲ here differentiates this part of the text from the section before it. This colon is about Jesus' movement to Galilee, and thus draws attention to a changing of scenery that is taking place. The reference to the second miracle becomes the prominent focus. Therefore this cluster can be described as: *Reference to the second miracle/sign in Galilee.*

3.2 Detail-Analysis of John 4:43–54

John 4:43–45

43 Μετὰ δὲ τὰς δύο ἡμέρας ἐξῆλθεν ἐκεῖθεν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν·⁴⁴ αὐτὸς γὰρ Ἰησοῦς ἐμαρτύρησεν ὅτι προφήτης ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ πατρίδι τιμὴν οὐκ ἔχει. 45 ὅτε οὖν ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, ἐδέξαντο αὐτὸν οἱ Γαλιλαῖοι πάντα ἑωρακότες ὅσα ἐποίησεν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ, καὶ αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἦλθον εἰς τὴν ἑορτήν.¹⁵

John 4:43–45 constitutes the transition between one narrative and the next (see Brown 1971:186; Wengst 2000:176; and Thyen 2005:284).¹⁶ It was, according to Barrett (1978:246), traditional for the Jews to travel to Jerusalem for Passover. After Jesus had been in Samaria for two days, the journey to Galilee (Jn 4:3) is continued. Brown (1971:186) is of the opinion that there is a close relation between chapter 4:43 and 4:3b (*He left Judea and went away into Galilee, ⁴but/and He needed to pass through Samaria.*).¹⁷ He maintains the theory that the journey from Judea to Galilee had to have been a fairly uninterrupted journey. To be sure, it is interrupted only by Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman. A clear (theological) relation exists between 4:43 and the story

15 Translation: ⁴³Now after the two days He went out from there and went to Galilee. ⁴⁴For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honour in his own country. ⁴⁵Therefore when He came into Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things which He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also went to the feast.

16 Wengst (2000:176) remarks: "V.43 markiert den Übergang: Nach den zwei Tagen, die in V.40 als Zeit des Aufenthaltes Jesus in Sychar genannt waren, bricht er nach Galiläa auf".

17 The Bible: English Majority Text Version (electronic edition). eSword.

unfolding before it in Samaria, that manifests itself here in the highlighting of the theme of *Jesus as the giver of life* in this section (4:1–42; 4:43–54; 5:1–8; and 6:1f.; according to Bultmann 1971:111–112; also according to Schnelle 1998:96).¹⁸ Thus, Barrett (1978:246) is correct when he wants to position this part of the text (Jn 4:43–54) within the broader context of chapters 2, 3 and 4, thereby also including the theme of ‘life’: “In every scene he is the giver of life.”¹⁹ In the first four chapters of John the term/idea of ‘life’ plays a central and decisive role. As remarked above, Jesus is the source of life (Jn 1:4) and he gives/shares this life to/with all believers (Jn 3:15, 16, and 36). Jesus also offers qualitative spiritual life—with the consequential new life possibilities within God’s family—to the Samaritan woman at the well, and subsequently also to the Samaritan people after he has spent two days with them (cf. Jn 4:10, 11, 14, and 36).

If the royal official was a gentile (according to Barrett 1978:245; Witherington 1995:128; Moloney 1998:153; and Bultmann 1971:205) the resultant narrative illustrates a progression of Jesus’ outreach—stretching out from Jews (Jn 3), to Samaritans (Jn 4:1), to gentiles (Jn 4:43–54). This is in accordance with the

18 According to Collins (1990:19) the narrative is traditionally ascribed to the Semeia source which the writer of the Gospel must have had access to. It is common knowledge that parallels exist between the Gospel of John and the Synoptic Gospels (compare Mt 8:5–13; and Lk 7:1–10), and it appears as if the Synoptic Gospels must have taken this miracle narrative from Q. Collins (1990:19) is of the opinion that all three gospel writers are narrating the same event. Of course there are major differences between the different versions—according to each author’s own theological angle and aim with the narrative. If a comparative study were to be done, it becomes clear that John 4:51–53 (the healing from a distance) is inserted by the author in an attempt to accentuate the miracle’s exceptional nature, as well as the life-giving ability/capability of Jesus. In the same way, John 4:48–49 has also been added by the author. Collins (1990:19) shows that Schnackenburg (1964) is correct when remarking that these additions reflect the Johannine tradition and viewpoint and use of signs. According to Collins (1990:20), the royal official as gentile must not be understood symbolically—therefore as referring to (or accentuating) the fact that Jesus actually wants to heal the whole world—which would be ‘*eisegesis*’, or reading into the text. Collins (1990:20) is of the opinion that the royal officer probably worked for Herod. Now, differing from Matthew and Luke, the narrative’s dynamic revolves around the faith of the royal official. Collins then remarks that the conclusion is important for the current thesis being: “Jesus’ word in the tradition that is specific to the Fourth Gospel is not simply a healing word as in the Synoptics; it is rather a life-giving word” (Collins 1990:20).

19 See Culpepper (1983:86–87) for the plot of the Gospel of John, as well as the way in which the author presents historic details—in such a way that it helps to achieve his theological aim.

pattern of Jesus' ministry in Acts (cf. Ac 1:8; also see Köstenberger 2004:169; and Moloney 1998:153).

John 4:44 compares Jesus' situation to that of a prophet who receives no acknowledgement or honour in his own country.²⁰ It is done with the particle οὖν linking John 4:44 and that which follows to that which has preceded it (see Thyen 2005). But it appears as if that which is found in John 4:45 is in tension with that which is written in John 4:44; for it is exactly the people of Galilee who receive Jesus heartily and with open arms.²¹ According to Brown (1971:187–188) this tension/problem as created in John 4:44, should be seen as an addition by the redactor. He refers to a certain tradition, also found in the Synoptic Gospels, which says that the Galileans did not understand the true identity of Jesus.²² That the Galileans also do not have 'true faith', becomes clear from their dependence upon signs and miracles (Jn 4:48), which stands in contrast to the type of faith that Jesus found in Samaria.²³ In light thereof the enthusiasm with which Jesus is received in Galilee (Jn 4:45) is "just as shallow as the reaction that greeted Jesus in Jerusalem" (Brown 1971:ii 23–25).

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- 20 Schnelle (1998:95) remarks that Jesus is quoting a well-known proverb/adage from his day: "Johannes zitiert das auch in der profanen Literatur belegte Sprichwort, das ein Prophet/Philosoph in seiner Heimat keine Anerkennung findet (vgl. Mark. 6,4; Matth. 13,57; Luk. 4,24). Damit bringt er das (negative) Urteil seiner Schule über das Wirken Jesu in Galiläa zum Ausdruck". Have a look at Schnelle (1998:95) for the antique secular sources in which the proverb/adage is found. Barrett (1978:244) draws attention to the fact that there are a few parallel texts in the Synoptic Gospels that show similarities with this version—Jesus' remark about a prophet not being known (given acclaim) in his own country in John 4:44 has parallels in Mark 6:1–6; Matthew 13:54–58; and Luke 4:16–30. Secondly, there are also parallels with the healing narrative in Matthew 8:5–13 and Luke 7:1–10; 13:28f. For this reason we should concentrate on the unique presentation as found in John (which is of course done in order to reach his theological aim with the narrative).
- 21 Wengst (2000:176) remarks: "Diese Akzeptanz Jesu in Galiläa wird damit begründet, dass ja auch die Galiläer als Festteilnehmer Zeugen des Wirkens Jesu in Jerusalem geworden waren". Schnackenburg (1990:464) remarks: "Hence 'receive' only means welcome of as superficial type, not that 'acceptance' (*lambanein tina*) which designates genuine faith (Jn 1:12; 5:43; cf. 3:1, 32f.; 12:48; 13:20; 17:8)".
- 22 Carson (1991:236) draws attention to the fact that Jesus found a more "correct" faith with the Samaritans; in contrast to his own people, who only believed because of the signs and miracles that they saw. The Samaritans believed in Jesus because of his teaching; the Galileans welcome Jesus, but not because he is the Messiah, only on the basis of the miracles that he has done. So, they may see and acknowledge Jesus as a miracle-worker, but not as the sent Son of God who comes to bring life.
- 23 See Carson (1991:236) for a similar opinion/viewpoint.

In this sense, then, John 4:44 is not really in tension with John 4:45; for the Galileans' dependence on signs and miracles is not actually a reflection of *authentic faith*.²⁴ This is in line with the research results of Neyrey and others (1991:29), who argue that all social interactions and rhetoric challenges outside the family can and should be seen as potential competition for honour. For this reason Neyrey and others (1991:29) argue that Jesus in this context, is actually challenging the people to acknowledge and accept his worthiness of honour and acclaim. Jesus represents his Father (Jn 5:19). If they believe in him (Jesus), and show him respect and give him honour, they are actually and eventually also showing respect and giving honour to the Father (Jn 5:23). Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:106) differ from the abovementioned scholars approach to explain this 'problem' either by way of the so-called inadequate faith of the Galileans, or by means of their theoretical construction regarding the redactor of the text. They (Malina & Rohrbaugh) argue from within a social-scientific viewpoint that the reason a prophet is not known or given acclaim in his own country can and should be ascribed to the perception of *limited good* in the ancient Mediterranean society. They are also of the opinion that ancient man experienced prophets negatively because it was expected that something would be taken away from them. "The prophet clearly 'gets ahead' of others in the group and thus is seen as depriving others in the group of whatever it is that makes the prophet prominent. The result is a social imbalance that must be rectified" (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:106). But, however it is understood, it remains true that the question as to the true identity of Jesus is in the foreground of this text (see Köstenberger 2004:172). The author creates opportunities wherein he can illustrate—through the use of the current *semeia*—who Jesus really is (thus revealing his true identity).

The relation between John 4:44–45 and John 2:23–25 is also striking. In both cases there are descriptions of people coming to faith because of the signs and miracles that Jesus did. So Nicodemus (Jn 3:1–21) came to Jesus on the basis of Jesus' earlier miracles. But according to John 3:10, Nicodemus had the wrong understanding of (and belief in) who Jesus is. This also meant that he did not have the means/capacity to understand what it all means and what it is all about (according to Jn 3:3—οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ; also according to Jn 3:4, 9). Jesus had to explain to Nicodemus who he is

24 See Brown (1971:187–188) for a comparison with the Synoptic tradition and the existence of a similar pattern.

and the fact that he had come from above to bring eternal life. In the process Jesus also progressively guides Nicodemus to a more authentic understanding of who he is, namely the *One who gives life* (Jn 3:14–15, 16, and 17).²⁵ It happens in the same way in the context of John 4:44–45 and that which follows. The Galileans received/welcome Jesus heartily, but had a wrong understanding of Jesus' miracles and his true identity. Bultmann (1971:204) is therefore correct when remarking: "However, the acclaim which Jesus finds in Galilee is not true recognition, just as the faith of the people of Jerusalem (Jn 2.23) was not true faith".

To summarise: In the context of that which follows, the *giving of life* and the *correct understanding of who Jesus is*, play a very important role. The honour/acclaim that Jesus desires is not honour/acclaim based on the miracles that he does, but honour/acclaim based on *who he is* and *where he comes from*. Barrett (1978:246) is thus correct when remarking:

In 2.13–22 he promises to raise up his body, the living Temple; in 3.1–21 he offers new birth and eternal life; in 3.22–36 the same theme is renewed (v. 36); in 4.1–42 Jesus offers living water, and in 4.46–54 he gives life to one who is at the point of death (v. 50, ὁ υἱὸς σου ζῆ). With the theme of life goes that of faith. For in 2.11 his nearest disciples believe, and in 4.53 so does a Gentile (at least, a Jewish 'outsider').

BARRETT 1978:246

John 4:46–47

46 Ἦλθεν οὖν πάλιν εἰς τὴν Κανὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίας, ὅπου ἐποίησεν τὸ ὕδωρ οἶνον. καὶ ἦν τις βασιλικὸς οὗ ὁ υἱὸς ἦσθέναι ἐν Καφαρναούμ. 47 οὗτος ἀκούσας ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἦκει ἐκ τῆς Ἰουδαίας εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν ἀπῆλθεν πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ ἠρώτα ἵνα καταβῇ καὶ ἰάσῃται αὐτοῦ τὸν υἱόν, ἡμελλεν γὰρ ἀποθνήσκειν.²⁶

25 Schnelle (1998:96) is correct when remarking: "Erschien Jesus dort als der, der lebendiges Wasser und ewiges Leben gibt (4,10.11.14.36), so kann die Heilung des Sohnes eines Basilikos als illustration dieser grundlegenden Aussagen verstanden werden".

26 Translation: ⁴⁶Then Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick in Capernaum. ⁴⁷When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and asked Him that He might come down and heal his son, for he was about to die.

The word οὖν in v. 46 connects what is now being told with the previous section, but also naturally shows the beginning of a new section (Brown 1971:194).²⁷ In order to be able to effectively sketch the narrative, the author has purposefully called upon a specific episode that has taken place earlier in the Gospel. The current background/decor of the narrative is outlined with the words of John 4:46:

Ἦλθεν οὖν πάλιν
 εἰς τὴν Κανὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίας,
 ὅπου ἐποίησεν τὸ ὕδωρ οἶνον.

It is clear that the current narrative unfolds against the backdrop of the miracle in Cana—where Jesus turned water into wine (cf. Jn 2:1–12; see also Wengst 2000:176).²⁸ Within the framework of *associative expectations* in/from the reader, a possible dramatic turn of events is anticipated at one stage or another (see Carson 1991:238).²⁹

27 See Carson (1991:236–237) for a discussion of the meaning of John 4:43–54 in the context of the development of the Gospel. For a discussion of the relation between this text and John 2–4, see Carson (1991:236–237). Brown (1971:194) discusses the similarities that exist between the second miracle (Jn 4:43–54) and the first miracle in Cana (2:1–11), and also gives a good theological perspective on the theme of life (Brown 1971:197). Brown (1971:192–193) also gives a good summary of the similarities of this pericope with its possible parallel texts in the Synoptic Gospels (i.e. Mt 8:5–13; and Lk 7:1–10; also see Barrett 1978:245; Beasley-Murray 1999:71; and Schnackenburg 1990:1.471–475). For arguments against the fact that this narrative refers to exactly the same events as in the Synoptic Gospels, see Carson (1991:234); Witherington (1995:127); Burge (2000:152–153); Morris (1995:255) and Ridderbos (1997:174–175).

28 Schnelle (1998:96) rightly indicates: “Johannes trennte beide Wundergeschichten und verlegte auch dieses zweite Wunder nach Kana, um so in einer Ringkomposition das erste öffentliche Auftreten Jesu abzuschliessen und Kana als besonderen Ort des Wirkens Jesu hervorzuheben”. This, naturally, in the context of the synoptic who have the narrative taking place in Capernaum. John makes Cana an important theological location. Köstenberger (2004:170) correctly draws attention to the fact that Capernaum is a very important location where healings take place in the Synoptic Gospels: the healing of the royal official’s servant (Mt 8:5–13), of Peter’s mother-in-law (Mt 8:14–17), of a lame/paralysed man (Mt 9:2–8), and possibly the resurrection of the Jewish official’s daughter (Mt 9:18–26).

29 Carson (1991:238) remarks: “The one who transformed water into wine, eclipsing the old rites of purification and announcing the dawning joy of the messianic banquet, is the one who continues his messianic work, whether he is rightly trusted or not, by bringing healing and snatching life back from the brink of death (cf. Is 35:5–6; 53:4a [cf. Mt 8:16–17];

3.2.1 *Crisis Situation*

The introductory words of the narrative (Jn 4:46) definitely sketches the crisis (a situation of disorientation) of the current narrative: καὶ ἦν τις βασιλικὸς υἱὸς τοῦ υἱοῦ ἡσθένει ἐν Καφαρναούμ (Jn 4:46). A certain royal official's³⁰ son was deathly ill (cf. Jn 4:47, and 49). Louw and Nida (1996: *ad loc*) describe ἀσθενέω³¹ under the sub-domain 23.144 as: *to be sick and, as a result, in a state of weakness and incapacity*—"to be sick, to be ill, to be disabled". Kittel, et al. (1985: *ad loc*) describe this word grouping as pertaining to 'weakness' (of different kinds).

61:1)". See also the Roberta C. Allen's website on her book *Interpreting the Interpreter: Intertextual Midrash in John's Gospel 1-4* on the use of the Old Testament in John: <<http://www.kton.demon.co.uk/mybook.htm>>. Allen (2007: *ad loc*) remarks: "The book explores the text from the viewpoint of a first century reader and examines in detail the scriptural allusions and other contemporary ideas. While the study is primarily addressed to students of the Gospel at all levels it would also appeal to those interested in biblical interpretation and early Christianity more generally. There have not been many studies devoted to John's use of scripture. Of the most recent A.T. Hanson's *The Prophetic Gospel* is possibly closest to this study. Hanson identifies which allusions the author may have used but does not offer an adequate explanation of how or why. This is in fact a major flaw in virtually all commentaries. This study suggests that the author used scriptures in a contemporary acceptable manner of intertextual *Midrash* to explain not only who Christ was but his significance in respect to current beliefs".

- 30 Who was this royal official? The Greek word βασιλικός can be translated as 'servant of the king' or 'royal official in service of the king' (Köstenberger 2004:169; Schnackenburg 1990:464). According to Carson (1991:238) the man was probably an official in the service of Herod Antipas (4 BCE–39 CE). According to Carson there are obscurities on whether the man was a Jew or a gentile (according also to Köstenberger 2004:169). See Brown (1966:192) and Lindars (1972:202), who are of the opinion that the royal official was probably a gentile. If the royal official was a gentile, it would mean that the narrative around (and the interaction of) Jesus with people shows a clear progression from the Jews (according to Jn 3), to the Samaritans (according to Jn 4), and eventually to the gentiles (according to Jn 4:43f.; see Moloney 1998:153). What does indeed come to the fore in this narrative is the fact that the royal official hails from Galilee and not from Jerusalem—the centre of the opposition in the Gospel. Jesus here illustrates an openness and that his love has no boundaries in terms of who he touches. Jesus' society is a society that is inherently inclusive—within Johannine faith terms. Also look at Josephus' *Ant.* 17. 266, 270, 281 etcetera, who use the term to refer to Herod's soldiers.
- 31 Stählin (1976: *ad loc*) emphasises that the term ἀσθενέω (in the New Testament) is seldom used to refer to pure biological or physical weakness. In the majority of cases it refers to the person in his/her totality, for example the weaker sex (as in 1 Pt 3:7: συνοικούντες κατὰ γυνῶσιν ὡς ἀσθενεστέρω σκευεῖ τῷ γυναικείῳ); or the "unimpressive appearance" of Paul in 1 Cor 2:3; and 2 Cor 10:10—ἡ . . . παρουσία τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενής.

In this context it illustrates ‘weakness’ because of ‘illness’. The word ἡσθένει³² can, according to Newman and Nida (1980:137), in this context be translated as ‘terminal illness’ or ‘dying’.³³ The royal official’s son³⁴ was, in other words, so sick as to be possibly at death’s door (according to Jn 4:47—ἤμελλεν γὰρ ἀποθνήσκειν; Köstenberger 2004:170). It can be accepted implicitly that the son was a gentile and not only on his way to physical death, but also—as a gentile—on the way to spiritual death [according to Jn 5:19f.]. On at least two different occasions the closeness of death is accentuated, namely in John 4:47 and John 4:49 (see Schnackenburg 1990:467).

In ancient times death was believed to be the ‘point of no return’ (see Spicq 1993:187): as Aeschylus (458 BCE) remarks (quoted by Salier 2004;³⁵ cf. *Agamemnon* 1275–1284; cf. also with I 1444–1445): “[L]ike a swan, hath sung her last lament in death...”³⁶ (also see Chrysippus in *Athenaeus* 14.616 b); 1019–1021: “But man’s blood, once it hath first fallen by murder to earth in darkling tide (πρὸν ἄπαξ θανάσιμον)—who by magic spell shall call it back? Even him who possessed the skill to raise from the dead...” (Translation by Smyth 1924:85).³⁷ Elsewhere in *Agamemnon* Aeschylus remarks: “The touch of bitter death is manifold”.³⁸ Similarly in Plutarch, *Moralia* 146, referring to Sapho has said: “Dead in the tomb shalt thou lie, nor shall there be thought of thee there...” (Loeb Classical Library, Plutarch, *Moralia*, 146 pp. 341). Liess (2005:430) agrees that death did not necessarily have a positive connection in ancient thought: “*Das Totenreich gilt als Land ohne Wiederkehr (Hi 7,9; 10,21; 16,22), als Ort der Finsternis (Ps 88, 7.13; Hi 10,21; 17,13) und des Staubes (Jes 29,19 u.ö.), des Vergessens (Ps 88,13) und Schweigens (Ps 94,17)*”. In classical Greek thought, according to Bultmann (1995:312–313), death was viewed negatively

32 Verb: Imperfektum, indicative, active, 3rd person singular of ἡσθενέω.

33 Kittel, Friedrich and Bromiley (1995, c1985:83).

34 In this narrative John uses three words to describe the royal official’s son, namely υἱὸς or son (Jn 4:46; 47; 50); παῖδιον or child (Jn 4:49), and παῖς or son (Jn 4:51). With Newman and Nida (1980:136) it is accepted that “... here the meaning of boy is evidently intended”.

35 Salier (2004) also quotes Aeschylus in this context. He was the first scholar that made me aware of the possible relation between John’s healing narratives and the category of death that is associatively connected hereto. With this I am thus acknowledging Salier (2004), and the reason why there will be reference to him in important places.

36 Translation of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* (1445) by Smyth (1926:129).

37 According to Smyth (1926:85, footnote 3) it refers to Aesculapius, who was hit with a thunderbolt by Zeus to punish him for his transgressions.

38 See <<http://classics.mit.edu/Aeschylus/agamemnon.html>>.

by (and for) the individual:³⁹ “Death destroys life; the shadowy existence of the dead in Hades is no true life. The most that may be expected is the survival or transmigration of the soul. All must die, so that death casts a shadow on life and its meaning”. In the New Testament the words ἀποθνήσκειν and τελευτᾶν are used in contexts where there is being referred to the *process of death*. In Greek thought death is seen as the fate of all people, something to be afraid of, and to avoid (according to Rv 9:6). Bultmann (in Kittel, et al. [c 1964] 1976 vol 3: *ad loc* 14–15) remarks:

Death is always the terrible thing which makes ζωή improper. No attempt is made to interpret death as a natural process and thus to neutralize it. Even where it is seen to be defeated by the resurrection and death and resurrection are described in terms of an analogy from nature (1 C 15:36; Jn 12:24), it is no more regarded as a natural process than is the resurrection. The process in view in the analogy is not to be regarded as a natural process in the sense of Greek science. The Whence? and Wherefore? of death can be understood mythologically with death as a demonic person (1 C 15:26; Rev 6:8; 20:13 f.) or the devil as the lord of death (Heb 2:14; on both → ζωή, II, 858). But the point of these mythologoumena, which are not aetiological, is to express the fact that death is opposed to life as the true being of God (ζωή, II, 863) and therewith also that sin and death belong together.

BULTMANN, IN KITTEL ET AL. [C 1964] 1976 VOL. 3: *AD LOC* 14–15

Pilch (1991:186) remarks, within the context of *Jewish thoughts*: “Life moreover, in a good state of being (e.g. clean, pure, whole) is preferable to life in an undesirable state (e.g. unclean with leprosy, blind, deaf and mute)”. He then argues that a ‘life’ state of existence is to be preferred above a ‘death’ state of existence. The worth of life, and the qualitative relation between life and death, is sketched strikingly in Ecclesiastes 9:4: ὅτι τις ὃς κοινωνεῖ πρὸς πάντας τοὺς ζῶντας; ἔστιν ἐλπίς, ὅτι ὁ κύων ὁ ζῶν, αὐτὸς ἀγαθὸς ὑπὲρ τὸν λέοντα τὸν νεκρόν.

For the author of Ecclesiastes a living dog is better than a dead lion, because the ‘life’ state of existence still represents hope. Also in Ezekiel 37 the dead bones are resurrected to life, an action strongly linked to hope. God is the

39 Sometimes death is seen as a deliverance/relief, as Aeschylus describes it in *Agamemnon* (according to 1345–1365): “No, it is not to be endured. No, death were better, for that were a milder lot than tyranny”. Bultmann (1996:313) agrees: “Yet death brings release from the dubious boon of life. Thus suicide may be liberation. Yet no one wants to die, and there is no knowledge of what comes after it”.

Creator-God and is associated with life (Jn 1:2–3). Sin is connected to life in the sense that sin takes away life (according to Bultmann 1995:312–313). Blindness, sickness, or death in other words takes something away from life, and is linked in this way with sin (according to Jn 9:2; see Dietzfelbinger 2001:1. 276–277).⁴⁰ God is the God of life, so where there is no life, in a sense, God is absent. God can withdraw when people sin, the result of that being that humanity would (for example) experience a loss of sight or function in their legs (according to Jn 9:2). Life and death both stood in antithesis to each other and included one another. These are two opposing theological concepts which form part of the typical Johannine dualism (Kysar 1993:58–77). Weiss in Kittel and others (1964 [vol. 6]: *ad loc* 958) are of the opinion that, in the ancient Mediterranean context, fever was oftentimes ascribed to supernatural or religious causes;⁴¹ remarking that:

[T]he fevers are regarded as of demonic origin or divine (as a punishment for sin). It need hardly be proved that the idea that sickness is demonic in origin and nature is a common one in the NT. Where, then, the NT refers to fever, the main reason is to demonstrate the dominion of Jesus over sin and the devil, or, as in the healing of the man born blind in Jn 9:3, ἵνα φανερωθῇ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ. The banishing of fever is a σημεῖον which awakens faith, Jn 4:53 f. This is faith in the Messianic salvation which has come with Jesus . . . , i.e., liberation from the bonds of sin and restoration of the state of creation.

WEISS IN KITTEL ET AL. 1964 [VOL. 6]: *AD LOC* 958

I agree with Pilch (2000:126) that the cause of the fever cannot be simply connected to the influence of evil spirits, especially since the Johannine text gives no explicit indication in this direction. But I do differ from him in that the fever could be ascribed to the so-called ‘evil eye’, only because it can plainly

40 Dietzfelbinger (2001:1. 276–277), in his commentary on John 9:2, mentions that blindness from birth was connected to sin in Jewish thought, but there is no development towards a relation/connection between life, death, and blindness. Köstenberger (2004:281) touches on this when remarking that: “The man was blind from birth. Lacking light, he also lacks life in the Johannine sense.”

41 In the immediate context it isn’t said what kind of illness/sickness he had. The closest we can get to a bio-medical diagnosis is to study the word πυρετός (translated as fever in John 4:52). In the New Testament we find three places where healing from πυρετός is mentioned: (1) Peter’s mother-in-law (Mk 1:30ff.; Mt 8:14ff.; and Lk 4:38ff.); (2) the royal official’s son (Jn 4:52); and (3) the father of Publius, the most prominent man in Malta (Ac 28:8).

not be argued this way from the text itself. In my opinion this type of interpretation is always in danger of making ethnocentric misinterpretations, and terms such as 'fever' and the description and understanding thereof, should therefore always be handled with care. I am of the opinion that Kittel et al. (1976: *ad loc*) are moving in the right direction by making a theological connection between sickness, death, and life. In the New Testament, death is oftentimes seen as the result of sin.⁴² Kittel et al. (1976: *ad loc*) agree with this viewpoint, remarking: "[F]or sin is consistently regarded as a responsible act and death as its consequence." Death is not viewed as a state of existence from which people can free themselves. In John, death is also judged on spiritual level as an inevitable result of humankind's position of disbelief. Here we see how the concepts of death, disbelief, and sin flow into each (according to Jn 8:21—καὶ ἐν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ὑμῶν ἀποθανέισθε). In John, humankind's sin is to be found in the fact that they do not know the 'light' (according to Jn 1:4), that they do not accept the revelation and teachings of Jesus (according to Jn 5:31ff.; and 8:13ff.), and that they believe that they are free (Jn 8:33) instead of asking for God's will (Jn 5:41ff.). Because of this, their state of existence is one of sin and death (Jn 8:21–24, 34–47).

In *Jewish thought*, because of sin, death is linked to suffering in hell (Mk 9:48; Lk 16:23 etc.—ᾗδης, γέεννα).⁴³ Yet, in other places in the New Testament, it is accepted that Christ is the *κριτὴς ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν*, and that physical death does not represent the end. After death punishment or salvation follow (Heb 9:27; according also to Rv 21:8: ἐν τῇ λίμνῃ τῇ αἰομένη πυρὶ καὶ θεῖῳ). The destructive power of death is viewed as something that steals the true quality of life. It is only faith in the revelation that Jesus brought, that can lead to life (according to 1 Jn 3:14; and especially Jn 5:21, and 25).⁴⁴ This crisis surrounding death definitely plays the decisive role in *motivating*

42 This conviction is commonplace in the New Testament and in Judaism. According to Romans 1:32; 6:16, 21, 23; and 7:5 (καρποφορῆσαι τῷ θανάτῳ); 8:6, 13; 1 Corinthians 15:56 (τὸ δὲ κέντρον τοῦ θανάτου ἡ ἁμαρτία); James 1:15 (ἡ δὲ ἁμαρτία ἀποτελεσθεῖσα ἀποκύει θάνατον); and, according to Galatians 6:7 f.; 2 Corinthians 7:10; John 8:21, and 24; and 1 John 5:16ff.

43 See Talbert & Pilch (1991) on the educational value of suffering.

44 In John Jesus is sketched as the lamb who takes away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29), and who also gets even with the destructive power of death as death has no power over him (according to Jn 10:17–18). Precisely because of this reason all those who believe will also not die (Jn 6:50; and 11:25f.), as they already move from a "death" state of existence into a "life" state of existence (Jn 5:24; and 1 Jn 3:14). Christ's death with ὑπὲρ construction, according to John 6:51; 10:11, 15; 11:51 f.; 15:13; 17:19; 18:14.

the royal official to turn to Jesus and to plead with him⁴⁵ to restore the brokenness of the situation by healing his son (ἰάσῃται;⁴⁶ according to Stibbe 1993:72; and Ridderbos 1997:175).⁴⁷

Against the background of Jesus' own people rejecting him as prophet, it is striking to observe this royal (gentile) official come to Jesus acknowledging him as the One who can restore life to his dying boy. Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:107) recognise the social implications of this act and remark: "In any case, whether a royal retainer or a royal aristocrat, the man whose son is near death had a very high social standing in a town like Capernaum. He was certainly not the type who would normally seek patronage of a villager from Nazareth". The fact that somebody like the royal official pleads with Jesus to heal his son (Pilch 2000:126) can also be seen as an indication of Jesus' growing reputation (also look at the use of the formal κύριε in Jn 4:49). In the previous narrative Jesus offered qualitative life to the Samaritan woman—someone who was believed to be inferior on the socio-religious cartography of the Jews (Jn 4:13–14). Jesus' later openness and willingness to hear and attend to the royal official's request can therefore also be seen as Jesus' openness and willingness to hear and attend to the world and to people in general (Jn 3:16). But, in my opinion, it appears as if this openness always has another side to it, and that it is not just openness for the sake of being open. No, it has a bigger aim in sight; for Jesus' openness in reacting to people's requests, always takes place within the context of self-revelation (according to Jn 2:1–14; 4:46–5:1, 18; 7:2–10; and 11:1–8). When Jesus responds positively to these people's requests around some or other crisis, he always transforms the crisis situation (see Giblin 1980:197–211; and Pilch 2000:124–125). Out of this transformative interaction—as a *σημεῖα*—the true identity of Jesus always shines forth. Barus (2006:139) is thus correct when saying: "Signs signify who Jesus is and create, in effect, a dividing point in human lives at which some people come to believe in his name (Jn 4:53–54) while others refuse him (e.g. Jn 11:47). The *σημεῖα* signify divine presence on earth to all ethnic groups, the universality of Jesus' witnessing activities". Differing from the Synoptic Gospels, in John Jesus is the one (in most cases) that is taking the initiative in healing the sick. In a few cases it is the other person who takes the initiative by requesting Jesus' help. Pilch (2000:124) agrees with this and states: "In John, he is rarely approached by others for help. Yet in those

45 According to Newman and Nida (1980:137) the Greek word that is here translated with "ask" (ἠρώτα), can also be translated as "plead"—as is the case in John 4:40.

46 Verb: Aoristus, subjunctive, medium, 3rd person singular of ἰάομαι.

47 The Greek word ἰάσῃται can, according to Swanson (1997: *ad loc*), be translated with "heal"; to "cause someone to achieve health after having been sick".

few instances when people do in fact make requests, as here, Jesus' response is always one of delaying reluctance, followed by compliance and then a return to the conflict with the hostile Judeans" (also according to Giblin 1980:197–211).⁴⁸ In Jn 4:47 it is the royal official pleading with Jesus to heal his son through an act of restorative healing, with the hope (the aim) that the looming and threatening deconstructive reality of death (ἤμελλεν γὰρ ἀποθνήσκειν⁴⁹ 4:47, 49) can be transformed to new life possibilities. Schematically the social dynamics of the text can be explained in the following way:

TABLE 5 *Social dynamics*

Greek Text	Action field
ἤμελλεν γὰρ ἀποθνήσκειν (4:47—also see 4:49)	Crisis situation: death
οὗτος ἀκούσας ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἦκει ἐκ τῆς Ἰουδαίας εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν	Opportunity or context: Jesus is near
ἀπῆλθεν πρὸς αὐτόν καὶ ἡρώτα ἵνα καταβῇ	Initiate interaction by asking question ⁵⁰
καὶ ἰάσῃται αὐτοῦ τὸν υἱόν,	Content of request/question: healing or restoration
ἤμελλεν γὰρ ἀποθνήσκειν	Motivation for the request/ question—crisis of potential death

48 See Pilch (2000:125) for a discussion in table format (on the basis of Giblin's 1980 research results) regarding the pattern/model that exists in the requests that people direct at Jesus: his initial reluctance to give heed to the request, Jesus' later decision to give heed to the request, followed by his entry into another conflict discourse with the unbelieving Jews. In his discussion he compares the pattern/model between the following texts: John 2:1–14 regarding the changing of water into wine; John 4:46–5:1, 18 regarding the healing of the royal official's son; John 7:2–10 regarding the request from Jesus' brothers that Jesus must go to Judea to show the people there the work that he is doing; and John 11:1–8 regarding Lazarus' sickness and resulting death.

49 Verb: Praesens, infinitive, active of ἀποθνήσκω, can be translated with 'death; in the process of dying'.

50 Although it appears as if the royal official understands who Jesus is and realises that he can give life, it in actual fact represents a misinterpretation of who Jesus truly is. The core of the royal official's misinterpretation lies on two levels: firstly, the man thinks that the

In the context of the crisis surrounding the potential death of his son, the royal official initiates interaction with Jesus on the basis of the opportunity that has presented itself. Jesus was nearby (Jn 4:47); and, where Jesus is, there also exists the possibility for life, restoration, and new life possibilities (Jn 1:4; and 5:21).⁵¹ The reader of course knows that this is true on two interpretative levels—the physical or material level, as well as the spiritual level (according to Jn 3:3; see Köstenberger 2004:123–124; and Carson 1991:191–196). The royal official initially had the need for Jesus' ability to give physical life on the basis of the crisis in which his son was at that moment (see Haenchen 1980:258–259). It appears as if the man does not realise who Jesus is on a spiritual level, as he had not yet come to faith. The fact that he has not come to faith yet, means that he was not religious. He was in Johannine terms still existing within a 'death' state of existence (according to Jn 5:24). The man thus does not come to Jesus on the basis of the spiritual life possibilities that Jesus can give, but on the basis of the threatening crisis of his son's apparent and imminent death.

Within the narrative context Jesus is about to enter onto the scene, right into the middle of this looming crisis situation. But here the question should be: 'What dynamics will come to the fore at the moment that Jesus, the Son of God and the Messiah (according to Jn 4:25–26), steps onto the scene?' Jesus Christ (Jn 1:17) is, after all, the One who has been revealed (Jn 1:41ff.; and 4:25). In contrast with Moses, the Messiah brings grace, mercy, truth, and eternal life; directly related to the correct knowledge regarding God and his sending of his

life that Jesus gives can only be realised if Jesus is himself present; secondly, that the type of life that Jesus offers/gives is only material or physical life. The author wants the reader to understand that the life that Jesus offers/gives does not cease to exist when Jesus himself is not there anymore (according to Jn 20:29). As Jesus dies and is resurrected and eventually returns to his Father—and is thus not physically present with the faith community anymore—it does not mean that the life that Jesus offered/gave ceases to exist. The author here accentuates the fact that there is life in Jesus' words, even while he was still on earth. Later, in John 20:29, Jesus accentuates that those who come to faith later on are those who really understand what faith is all about—even without seeing him. The implication of course being that, even though Jesus is no longer on earth, his words will still be here. Thus the true life and faith that Jesus offers/gives is closely related to his words. The same words of the Jesus that lived on earth still offer/give the same life—even though Jesus is not physically present on earth anymore. Jesus' words are in any case not subordinate to the material reality; Jesus' words are words that reveal the spiritual reality. And only those who have been born again (spiritually), will be able to understand these truths and therefore receive life (Jn 3:3).

51 The word ζῳοποιεῖ appears in John only in this instance and in John 6:63, where the reference is to the words of Jesus and to the Spirit that gives life (see Brown 1966:214; and Köstenberger 2004:187).

own Son (Jn 11:27; and 17:3; also look at Jn 1:20; 1:41; and compare with 1:45, and 49). In John, Jesus is the majestic and royal Messiah, the Son of God and the Son of man (according to Jn 1:51; also have a look at the relation between the Holy Spirit and Jesus in Jn 1:33) who stands in an intimate relationship with the Father (Jn 5:19ff.). Some people accept Jesus as the Messiah, like the Samaritan woman, after Jesus has revealed his identity to her (Jn 4:25–26; and 4:29). Others reject him on the basis of his geographical roots (Jn 7:26–27). Jesus reacts upon this by declaring that his true origin and his mission comes from his heavenly Father (Jn 7:28–29; and 7:41–42). In and through his words and through what he does, he illustrates who he is, acting as the true agent of the Father (Jn 12:31–32; 14:12ff.). Those who do not believe in him, challenge Jesus to prove the fact that he is the Messiah (Jn 10:24). Jesus reacts by focusing them on his words and his works, the truth of which can only be received in faith (Jn 10:25). The believers are those who know his (Jesus') voice and who have received life (Jn 10:27). Grundmann (1995:1334) correctly states that: "He is the Messiah as the Shepherd who leads his people, whose voice they obey, who gives them life, whose power, grounded in his unity with God, is superior to death (Jn 12:31–32). He is the Messiah as God's Son (Jn 1:49; 11:27)—a reason for offense (Jn 5:18; 10:31 ff.). As Son of God and Messiah, he is also the Revelation who, in revealing, grants life by way of his passion and exaltation".

EXCURSUS: Health as opposed to sickness and death

How was the concept "health" viewed in ancient times?

For the writers of the Old Testament, life is the basic characteristic of being human. This life does not refer to quantitative life, but to qualitative life. According to Wilkinson (1998:11) the word *shalom* is the word in the Old Testament that illustrates the concept of *wellbeing* par excellence. This word is found roughly about 250 times in the Old Testament. Because of this Wilkinson (1998:11) is of the opinion that, in the context of the Old Testament, the phrase rather refers to a holistic well-being or *shalom*, which can be linked to qualitative life possibilities—especially as it is found in the prophetic texts (e.g. 31 times in Jeremiah; 27 times in Isaiah; and 27 times in the Psalms). The word *shalem* is the stem-word from which *shalom* is produced, and refers to totality and wholeness: "The usage of the word in the Old Testament is to denote the presence of wholeness, completeness and well-being in all spheres of life whether physical, mental and spiritual, or individual, social and national" (Wilkinson 1998:12). It is thus a pregnant expression for everything that is good; i.e. the sum of all of God's good gifts to his people (according to

Von Rad 1964:402). Wilkinson (1998:17) correctly remarks that: “Health or well-being is the wholeness of human beings and their personality, and the holiness of their character and actions expressed in righteousness and obedience to God’s law”. There was therefore in the context of the Old Testament, a clear relation between human holiness and a healthy relationship with God—those that lived close to God would experience his goodness and would receive his wholeness; whereas those that were sick were obviously broken and had lost their wholeness. For this reason brokenness and impurity/unholiness were directly linked to sin—in the sense that sickness was oftentimes seen as a consequence of sin (according to Jn 9:ff.). Therefore it can be said that it was important for the Jews to reflect (and to strive to reflect) the wholeness and holiness of God in their being and on their person by being whole and holy (according to Lv 11:44–45; 19:2; and 20:26). Sickness thus threatens the individual’s wholeness and holiness, wrenching the individual from the ideal position for life possibilities—for this reason it can and should be seen as socio-religious crisis. For the Jews, health also consisted of being in the right relationship reality—with God being seen as the source of all life and life possibilities and as the One that gives wholeness and holiness (according to Lv 20:8; 21:8, 15, 23; and 22:9, 16, 32). Obedience and submission to God ensured this wholeness and holiness given by God (according to Dt 30:15–18). Therefore it can be argued that the *right relationship* with God leads to wholeness; whereas the wrong relationship with God leads to brokenness and unholiness. This means that Wilkinson (1998:19) is correct when he states that: “First of all and most important of all, health consists in a right relationship to God expressed in our obedience to his will and our worship of his name. These result in holiness for righteousness is the content and expression of holiness which is spiritual wholeness”. According to the Gospel of John’s theology there exists a fundamentally broken relationship between God and human beings (according to Jn 1:10–11), which can be directly linked to their spiritual blindness—blindness caused by disobedience and rebellion and eventually resulting in the holistic brokenness or unholiness of the whole of the human race.

How was the concept “death” viewed in ancient times?

From within a Western Bio-medical paradigm we understand sickness as something having a certain “biological” source. But in ancient times many illnesses/diseases could not be explained and were therefore interpreted as attacks from evil spirits which could only be overcome by

witchcraft or sacrifices. As time went on, people started using plant and animal material to heal illnesses; but religion and superstition still played a very crucial role in any attempts at healing a person. In Hellenism we find gods of healing, especially Apollo and Asclepius. Tales of miracle healing by Vespasian and Hadrian are also told at length (Craffert 1999:51).

In the Old Testament and in Judaism some illnesses—such as psychological disorders, leprosy, and illnesses that lead to death—were associated with evil spirits. With the passing of time people saw that God could also cause illness or protect against it (Bultmann in Kittel 1964: *ad loc*). This may have been a sign of God's keeping himself in check (according to Is 38). But, if there is no apparent cause for an illness, the result spells problems for the righteous (according to Job). Where conversion or repentance has taken place, there healing will also take place (2 Sm 12:15ff.). In the Old Testament the Priest is placed in control of sickness and the managing thereof (Lv 13:49ff.). God is believed to be the only true healer; with prayer naturally forming a very important part of the healing process (Ps 6; 16:10; 38; and 107:17).

In the *Old Testament* we also find hints of healing in the figurative sense of the word. God 'heals' by withholding judgement (and this judgement could according to Jr 3:22, be in the form of sickness or any number of other types of ailments). Once again 'healing' is only mentioned within the context of conversion or of repentance taking place (Seybold & Müller 1978:36–37). With this in mind, it becomes clear that in the Old Testament there is a maintenance of a predestined relational connection between healing and forgiveness, especially where there is mention of the restoration of the broken relationship between God and human beings. Healing and restored relationships and a restored relational community are thus clearly connected. The prophet is held up as the one who brings the message that the time has come for those people with broken hearts to be healed (Is 61:1), through the one that proclaims and teaches the good news. The servant of the Lord, in this paradigm, undergoes a lot of suffering, with the purpose to illustrate the truth that "through his wounds we find healing".⁵²

In the *New Testament* illness is oftentimes linked with demons/evil spirits (e.g. Mt 12:22). Only in one or two contexts it is interpreted or seen as being the result of divine judgement (e.g. Rv 8). Sickness in the New Testament is in essence understood as something that is in contrast to God's plan with creation, and therefore something which people must be

52 Cf. Bowker (1970).

freed from (see Lk 10:34; Col 4:14; and 1 Tm 5:23). In all of the Gospels Jesus is presented as the great Healer/Physician. Jesus also calls himself the Healer (see Mk 2:17 and Lk 4:23). On several occasions Jesus performed 'healing' over a (spatial) distance. In such cases faith is considered an important prerequisite for healing; but this faith is not in the first place faith in the miracles as such, but rather in the person of Jesus himself. This presupposes a relationship of trust, a conviction of God's power, and a resulting commitment to obedience (Jn 4:46ff.) by the receiver of the 'healing'. In the text at hand the healing of the royal official's son is not only a physical healing; in the end, the whole household also receives eschatological healing (see Kittel, Friedrich, & Bromiley 1995, c1985:344). In primitive Ancient Near Eastern and Greek thought sickness and sin are also often relationally connected to each other—for example many Babylonian words for sin also refer to sickness. Oepke in Kittel et al. (1995: *ad loc* 655)⁵³ remarks that: "Many Babylonian words for sin also denote sickness, and Babylonian penitential psalms often complain about disease and destruction. Expiations are designed to restore the body". The New Testament views sickness as something which stands in tension with God's creative will, as something which involves the demonic, as well as making a general link between sickness and sin (see e.g. Mt 12:22; contra Jn 9:1ff.). In Mark 2:17 Jesus views sickness as a figurative form of sin, but only does this to illustrate that he has come to redeem sinners; for, in John 9:1ff., Jesus protests against the traditional link between sin and sickness. In contradiction to the generally accepted cultural-religion point of view, Jesus links sickness to the glorification of God. Consequently we find here a connection between healing and redemption but in the sense that healing has soteriological implications. In the end sickness is not exclusively a sign of sin, or a sign of God's withdrawal (compare to the relation between sin and punishment). Rather it should be seen as an illustration of the fact that God is actually present. Subsequently that which happens in the 'healing' situation is actually serving as revelation of Jesus' true identity. Those who believe this about the miracles done by Jesus, are redeemed because they have come to the correct understanding of Jesus' true nature/identity. Seybold and Müller (1978:63) are in other words correct when stating that: "Wohl aber vereinen sich in jenem Passionsgemälde Aspekte menschlichen Leidens und verdichten sich zu einem Bild, das in der Verflechtung von Schuld-Strafe-Leiden-Tod einem Sinn erkennen lässt, der alle Vorstellungskraft

53 Entry by A Oepke on 'nosos' or sickness in Kittel (1995: *ad loc* 655).

übersteigt: Fürwahr, unsere Krankheiten hat er getragen und unsere Schmerzen auf sich geladen; die Strafe lag auf ihm zu unserem Heil, und durch seine Wunden sind wir geheilt" (according to Is 53:4).

John 4:48

48 εἶπεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς πρὸς αὐτόν, Ἐὰν μὴ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἴδῃτε, οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε⁵⁴

3.2.2 *Build-up to the Transformational Interaction*

Before Jesus allows the crisis to culminate—through a miraculous transformational interaction—into a restorative miracle and correct representation of reality, first the territory and most important values need to be clarified. In this way the miracle is sketched against a specific background, making it possible for the reader to interpret the healing/miracle in a specific way.

At first, after the royal official has approached Jesus to plead with him to heal his son, Jesus' initial reaction is not very positive (Ridderbos 1997:176). Jesus is thus delaying the act of healing for a few moments whilst making a very important remark. The Greek text begins in a typical Johannine fashion with the particle οὖν. The expression Ἐὰν μὴ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἴδῃτε points to a word construction (or *hendiadis*), often found in the Old Testament, in which two nouns are connected to each other with 'and'. This has the same effect as when a noun is influenced or changed by an adjective. In this context, the word 'miracles' thus intensifies the word 'signs', and can be translated as 'miraculous signs/wonders' (Newman and Nida 1980:137). Jesus apparently has it in for those who believe only on the basis of these miraculous signs and wonders that he does (see Laney 1992:102; and Kysar 1986:72).⁵⁵ Jesus wants people to believe in him on the basis of *who* he is (Moloney 1998:153). The reader thus understands (at this point of the narrative) that those who believe in Jesus on the basis of his works are in fact those who believe in the "wrong" reality (Schnackenburg 1990:1.469; and Dietzfelbinger 2001:132). They are those people who do not really understand who Jesus is and what his mission is truly about (Köstenberger 2004:170). Although the royal official turns to Jesus as the source of life possibilities, he does not really understand who

54 Translation: ⁴⁸Then Jesus said to him: "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe".

55 Kysar (1984:72) is of the opinion that: "It has been suggested that this verse stands out in the story like an editorial insertion made in a narrative drawn for the most part from the signs source . . ."

Jesus is—his need for Jesus' life-giving abilities is material and self-centred (see Köstenberger 2004:196–170; and Ridderbos 1997:176). In John 3:3, 6 Jesus has already explained to Nicodemus that one first has to be reborn before one can come to an understanding of what is truly happening through “faithful eyes/sight” (Barrett 1978:208; Carson 1991:190; and Morris 1995:190). Those that have not been born again (γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν—Jn 3:3) look at Jesus and the things he does through material (fleshly or σάρξ—Jn 3:6) eyes instead of with spiritual/“faithful” (πνευμά—Jn 3:6) eyes. The author thus wants the reader to understand that it is not about people or about physical signs and wonders, but about Jesus and about a correct understanding of who he truly is (Carson 1991:238). With these words Jesus thus places the healing miracle within the correct perspective (as construed by the author). The use of the plural of ‘you’ is an indication that Jesus was not only talking to the royal official, but was also trying to address the bigger issue of the implied readers. Jesus thus has it against all those people who build their faith exclusively on the witnessing of visible signs (σημεῖα). The motive of the royal official and of his approaching Jesus, comes out of his own personal tension and worry over the crisis of his son's imminent death. Jesus' problem is that, if he were not to do miracles, the man would most probably not be interested in him or believe in him. It thus appears as if Jesus is sceptic, or rather critical, of the man's motive (Ridderbos 1991:174). The text wants to make it clear that this specific character's (the royal official) goal is not in the first place to see Jesus performing miracles in general, but because he is desperate for Jesus' healing ability to resolve his crisis position with his dying son.⁵⁶

Ridderbos (1991:176) argues that Jesus' delayed reaction on the royal official's request/beseeching should not in the first place be seen as an accusation, but rather as a challenge to exercise ‘correct’ faith. *Jesus obviously did not want to just restore functional biological life to the son, but rather wanted to give the whole household eschatological life (also see Jn 6:27–29)*. This argument is in line with the function of the healing narratives as σημεῖα, namely that the healing miracles in John are mostly just signs functioning to reveal Jesus' true identity. Beasley-Murray (1987:73) is thus correct when saying that the healing of the royal official's son would later become a sign of Jesus' power and ability to give

56 Compare with Bultmann (1971:207): “Of course for the Evangelist the very appearance of Jesus means that men are faced with the challenge to believe in him as the Revealer; and for him it is a misunderstanding if ‘faith’ expects from Jesus a miraculous liberation from physical distress”. According to Bultmann, the writer of the Gospel of John wanted to set aright/correct people's naive faith in miracles and wonders (σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα) as it is found in the Synoptic tradition (according to Mk 8:11v; Mt 12:39f; and Lk 11:16–29).

life; life which in the discourse that follows (according to Jn 5:24), would be defined as everlasting life, and as resurrection life (Jn 5:21; 25–26, and 28–29).⁵⁷

The father—the royal official—is motivated into movement by the critical position his dying (ἀποθανεῖν) son finds himself in (according to Jn 4:47, and 49).⁵⁸ He insists (pleads strongly) that Jesus should come (κατάβηθι)⁵⁹ in order to be able to heal his son. The narrator thus characterises the royal official as a caring father, but also as an example of someone whose faith later develops into ‘true’ faith (Stibbe 1993:72). The royal official’s primary request is for Jesus to heal his son (υἱόν; Jn 4:47). According to Stibbe (1993:72) the narrator initially characterises Jesus as being unwilling to heal the boy, due to the crowd’s ‘wrong’ faith (Jn 4:48), as has already been discussed above. But then the urgency of the situation is intensified because the royal official continues to plead with Jesus to heal his son. Here the words τὸ παιδίον μου are used, instead of the previous υἱός. (Jn 4:47). The Greek word παιδίον differs from υἱός in the sense that the first word usually refers to a small boy; in this context obviously leading to a more emotionally laden plea because of the additional emotional choice of words (Köstenberger 2004:170; Morris 1995:257; Moloney 1998:153; and Burge 2000:158). So, at this point it appears as if the father is becoming more (openly) emotional about the crisis. Barrett (1978:248) is thus correct when he states that: “The officer is in fact actuated by motives of compassion for his child . . .” With any and all force that might be necessary he wants to take Jesus with him to his son so that Jesus can heal him.

3.2.3 *Transformation Interaction*

Jesus’ reaction to the man’s request is almost shocking—he sends the man away (πορεύου) with only four words: ὁ υἱός σου ζῇ—*your son lives*.⁶⁰ These

57 Ridderbos (1991:176). Compare with Barrett (1978:246).

58 Translation: ⁴⁹The nobleman said to Him, “Sir, come down before my child dies!” ⁵⁰Jesus said to him, “Go; your son lives”. And the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and went away.”

59 Stibbe (1993:73) argues that the use of the word κατάβηθι in John 4:49 wants to keep the U-shaped plot of the Gospel fresh in the readers’ minds. In John 11:55 and 12:20 the words are used strategically to sketch Jesus’ geographical movements. In the context of John 3 the reader knows that Jesus uses these words himself to refer to his incarnation and ascent into heaven (*or descent and ascent*).

60 Barrett (1978:248) argues that ζῇ here refers to “recover from disease”, as in the context of Numbers 21:8. Newman and Nida (1980:138) agree with Barrett, arguing that it is thus a reflection of a “Hebraism” from the Old Testament context. They argue: “Will live in this verse, is going to live in verse 51, and will live in verse 53 are all in the present tense in Greek (literally ‘is living’). Although the present tense is used, it is obvious that in each instance the focus is on the fact that the child will continue to live”.

words are all that the man receives, and with only these words he had to faithfully continue with this journey alone.⁶¹ This must have been anti-climax for him, as he undoubtedly expected and hoped that Jesus would come with him to his son. He probably believed that the restoration he so desired could only take place if Jesus himself were actually and physically present with his son. This leads to an important question: how is the author going to resolve the tension that he has just created? And what about the problem of peoples' possible misinterpretation of what had happened? Put another way, how is the tension surrounding this 'wrong' belief regarding signs and wonders be resolved whilst still serving the aim of the Gospel? Actually, this was a brilliant strategy and tactical move that Jesus implemented here. Seen from the context of Jesus' serious protest against this "superficial" faith, he had to challenge that kind of faith in an unconventional way. This is precisely what he did in and through this transformation⁶² interaction or act of miraculous healing, in order to be able to illustrate what he meant. How is the author going to solve this wrong perception through the words of Jesus, while still developing the current crisis of faith onto a next level of abstraction? This of course in order to be able to get to the faith terms used in John 20:29 (μακάριοι οἱ μὴ ἰδόντες καὶ πιστεύσαντες)? To be able to reach this goal the author must create dramatic turns in the story, turns which challenge the reader rather radically. Accordingly, the author sketches Jesus as the One who introduces the revelation which would lead to the next level of abstraction: Jesus sends the man back home again, and into the context of the crisis, alone with only the words: "ὁ υἱός σου ζῇ" (Jn 4:50).⁶³ In this way the issue surrounding faith in the words (or teachings) of Jesus (without seeing him as well) is strongly brought forward in the narrative (see Schnackenburg 1990:1.467). The reader is left with the tension; how is this man going to respond to Jesus' challenge? Is Jesus' power going to be proven?

From here the narrative flows into a true example of faith; since according to the text, the man believed the words that Jesus had spoken (ἐπίστευσεν) and went away from there (τῷ λόγῳ ὃν εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἐπορεύετο) without

61 The man believed (ἐπίστευσεν) before he had any physical signs that the intervention had taken place.

62 Sophocles, *Aj.* 517 remarks: "a stroke of fate, O inhabitants of Hades, transformed my father, my mother into dead ones" (αἰδοῦ θανάσιμους οἰκητήρας). See also Spicq (1993:187).

63 Maier (1984:188–189) pays attention to the fact that the words ὁ υἱός σου ζῇ "[E]rinnern uns die Worte 'Dein Sohn lebt!' an die Wunderheilungen des Elisa (1 Kö 17,230 und Elisa (2 Kö 4,36). Dadurch werden wir noch einmal darauf hingewiesen, dass Jesus als 'der Prophet' vollendet, was die atl. Propheten begonnen haben".

any visible confirmative sign that the desired intervention had actually taken place (Barrett 1978:248). Here ἐπίστευσεν refers to the taking to heart of Jesus' words and the making of a commitment to these words (see Schnackenburg 1990:1467). All the man was left with were four powerful words of hope. His faith is being tested to the limit (Ridderbos 1997:176).⁶⁴ Schnackenburg (1990:464) remarks: "The faith which adheres to Jesus and his words is the way to life. Jesus can give life by his word, but he demands faith as the presupposition of his gift". Elsewhere Schnackenburg (1990:467) remarks that it appears that "[H]e attained a degree of faith higher than that of the Galileans, who believe only what they 'see.'" The royal official displays and maintains exceptional faith.⁶⁵ This is (of course) in contrast to the type of faith that Jesus protested against only moments ago. The royal official believes without having seen any miracles; which signifies a progression of faith (Witherington 1995:128); as well as character development with regard to the 'faith personality' of this royal official (see Ridderbos 1997:177). Though this is still not the 'correct' understanding of Jesus' identity (according to Jn 4:53), it is an indication of the process of slowly but surely getting there (according to Bultmann 1971:208).

But at this stage the tension within the reader is allowed to build up again—what is going to happen? Will the man's faith be disappointed and his hope shattered? Is the boy going to be healed, or not? If the miracle were to take place, it would confirm that Jesus indeed does have the power to give life; and (in the development of the plot of the Gospel) this—as the first miracle

64 Ridderbos (1997:176) states it so succinctly: "With increasing urgency the man has asked Jesus to go down to his house with him, who to him seemed indispensable if his son was to have a chance. But Jesus sends him away—with his word of power . . . , but that word had to be enough for the man".

65 Bultmann (1971:208) draws attention to the fact that ἐπίστευσεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος . . . καὶ ἐπορεύετο "underlines the moral of the story". He argues accordingly that here the reference is not to faith in the complete sense of the word, in other words to mature faith, as the fullness of this faith is only first reached in John 4:53. But, insofar as the fact that the man believes without seeing, his faith represents one aspect of true faith which is eventually followed by the physical manifestation of a miracle. In my opinion the "moral of the story" is more about this element of faith; especially when keeping in mind that the miracle healing as *semeia* has as first aim the revelation of Jesus' true identity, and as second the creation of faith. Jesus' true identity is here definitely revealed in this context of death and brokenness—a context into which he gives/grants life. So the "moral of the story" rather exists therein that the miracle healing is about life and Jesus' giving/granting thereof. Köstenberger (2004:166–172) does not make enough of this connection between the miracle healing and the meaning thereof in terms of Jesus' life-giving capabilities.

healing—would be a sign linking Jesus’ works to the re-creating works of the Father (according to Jn 5:21). If Jesus were to be able to give life through his words, it indissolubly connects him to the Creator God (according to Witherington 1995:129); no, even more than this, it would illustrate and affirm the very intimate relationship that exists between the Father and the Son (Jn 5:18–20; see Schnackenburg 1990:467).⁶⁶ It would definitely be the first sign of the truth that Jesus would later teach—which is that God has given everything over into Jesus’ hands (Jn 13:3); enabling him to offer and give life (Jn 5:26), because he himself is the living water (Jn 4:10), the bread of life (Jn 6:27–59), and even the resurrection and the life (Jn 11:25; see Köstenberger 2004:335). Indeed, already in the prologue Jesus was described as the One who has life inherent to his being, and is therefore an inherent source of life (Jn 1:4; and 11:25; see Carson 1991:412). If Jesus was to ‘prove’ here, in and through the first miracle healing of the Gospel, that he undoubtedly does have the ability to give life even within the context of death (compare with Jn 4:47, and 49), it would certainly set the stage for the event (and the interpretation) of Jesus’ own death and resurrection (Jn 12:24).⁶⁷

John 4:51–54

51 ἤδη δὲ αὐτοῦ καταβαίνοντος οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ ὑπὴντησαν αὐτῷ λέγοντες ὅτι ὁ παῖς αὐτοῦ ζῇ. 52 ἐπύθετο οὖν τὴν ὥραν παρ’ αὐτῶν ἐν ᾗ κομψότερον ἔσχεν· εἶπαν οὖν αὐτῷ ὅτι Ἐχθὲς ὥραν ἐβδόμην ἀφῆκεν αὐτὸν ὁ πυρετός. 53 ἔγνω οὖν ὁ πατήρ ὅτι [ἐν] ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐν ᾗ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ὁ υἱός σου ζῇ, καὶ ἐπίστευσεν αὐτὸς καὶ ἡ οἰκία αὐτοῦ ὅλη. 54 Τοῦτο [δὲ] πάλιν δεῦτερον σημεῖον ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλθὼν ἐκ τῆς Ἰουδαίας εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν.⁶⁸

66 Witherington (1995:129) affirms this argument: “For one who has followed the Fourth Evangelist’s story this far, this is hardly surprising—the Word who created the world has no trouble making the return of good health to one individual into a reality by speaking”.

67 It is interesting, on a textual level, that the word ἀποθνήσκω and its inflexions are used here (Jn 4:47, 49) and in John 12:24 when Jesus is referring to his own death.

68 Translation: ⁵¹And already as he was going, his servants met him and reported, saying, “Your child lives!” ⁵²Then he inquired from them the hour at which he got better. And they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.” ⁵³Therefore the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, “Your son lives.” And he himself believed, and his whole household. ⁵⁴This again is the second sign Jesus did, after He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

On the way back to his home,⁶⁹ the royal official runs into people from his household.⁷⁰ These servants of course had no idea of the official's encounter with Jesus (Köstenberger 2004:172; Ridderbos 1997:176; Schnackenburg 1990:1.468; and Bultmann 1971:208; also see Lincoln 2005:188).⁷¹ Therefore the servants function as the impartial witnesses that carry with them the positive result of the crisis situation, and the resultant message of hope and revelation (see Bultmann 1971:208; Köstenberger 2004:171–172; and Schnackenburg 1990:1.468). Without any interruption the text moves into the success story: ἤδη δὲ αὐτοῦ καταβαίνοντος οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ ὑπήντησαν αὐτῷ λέγοντες ὅτι ὁ παῖς αὐτοῦ ζῇ (Jn 4:51). The royal official wanted to know when exactly the fever left his son; to which his servants answer that the fever⁷² had left him at precisely the seventh hour.⁷³

69 Morris (1995:258) is of the opinion that the rather free usage of the genitive absolutis αὐτοῦ καταβαίνοντος, in light of the αὐτῷ that is also found in other places in the New Testament, should not necessarily have to have any meaning/content implications.

70 Pilch (2000:120) and other social-scientific scholars are of the opinion that illness leads to impurity and unholiness, which in its turn leads to socio-religious marginalisation. In his discussion of John 4:43f. Pilch (2000:120) remarks: "The central concern in all sicknesses within traditional societies is the sick person's experience of being dislodged from his/her social moorings and social standing (see Lv 13:46)". It is important to see that the specific act of healing took place within the context of the household. Which means that, in the current narrative, socio-religious marginalisation was not happening. It would thus be very difficult to prove Pilch's statement from within the current/text itself narrative—as well as other narratives, such as the resurrection of Lazarus.

71 Köstenberger (2004:171–172) agrees and remarks: "As in 2:5–10, the servants function as impartial witnesses, since they were unaware of what had transpired".

72 Newman and Nida (1980:139) draw attention to the fact that the expression the "fever has left him" is the same expression that is used in Mark 1:31 and Matthew 8:15. It has already been explained elsewhere what could be meant with the term 'fever'.

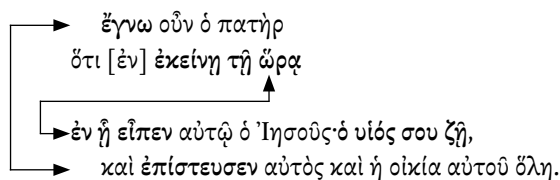
73 Newman and Nida (1980:139) argue that John probably began counting the 7 hours of the morning from 06:00, and therefore called it the seventh hour; for the seventh hour after 06:00 AM would be 13:00 PM. Morris (1995:258) then draws attention to the fact that 13:00 would indeed have been the time had the author of John been using the normal method for measuring the time. Morris then argues that Cana and Capernaum were about 20 miles from each other. For this reason some scholars feel that it is unlikely that the royal official would still be on foot so late in the day; and propose that the author of John was using the Roman way of measuring time, making the time around 19:00 PM. But, together with Morris, I feel uncomfortable with this interpretation. And with MacGregor, as quoted in Morris (1995:258; footnote 120) I accept: "it is certain that John is not the least concerned with problems of time and distance. It is enough for him that the healing occurred simultaneously with the word of Jesus".

The man⁷⁴ knew (ἔγνων) there and then, that was the exact time that Jesus spoke those words of life/healing (Jn 4:53). Morris (1995:258) is of the opinion that the Aorist construct κομψότερον ἔσχεν (Jn 4:52) indicates “sudden recovery”.⁷⁵ The hour in which the healing took place was the culminating affirmation of the fact that Jesus’ words had proved to be true (later it would also be the arrival of Jesus’ hour that would lead the disciples to the correct understanding as to who Jesus really is, as well as to the firm belief that his words are true (see Jn 2:21–22). Ridderbos (1997:176) states that: “The outcome of the story confirms both Jesus’ words and the Royal Official’s (the father’s) faith.”⁷⁶

This miracle healing is thus placed against the backdrop of a context where the crisis of death and loss of life possibilities takes centre stage. This is done in order to accentuate the reality of Jesus’ life-giving abilities/capabilities. Schnackenburg (1990:467) is thus correct when he states that: “The double affirmation that death is near (vv. 47, 49) has its counterpart in the triple affirmation that the child will live (vv. 50, 51, 53). The contrast is deliberate, and shows the wish to depict the miracle as a recall from death to life” (also according to Wengst 2000:178; Dietzfelbinger 2001:132–133; and Maier 1984:188–189). In this way the current narrative is especially supportive to the author of the Gospel to reach his goal, which is to illustrate and accentuate that Jesus is the One who came to bring life (Jn 20:30–31), as well as to fulfil God’s desire, not to let people stay lost (Jn 3:16).

3.3 Reorientation and Representation of Reality, with Accompanying New Life Possibilities within the Family of God

In John 4:53 the culminating act of this narrative is strikingly sketched:



74 The healing narrative shows clear progression in terms of the author’s description of the royal official: from a certain royal official (τις βασιλικός [Jn 4:46]), to ‘the man’ (ὁ ἀνθρώπος [Jn 4:50]), to ‘the father’ (ὁ πατήρ [Jn 4:53]; compare with Moloney 1998:161).

75 Newman and Nida (1980:138) state that the best Greek manuscripts here use indirect speech, therefore they suggest that this phrase should be translated in line with the ‘shall live’ from John 4:50 as: “is going to get well again”, or “is going to recover”, or “is recovering”.

76 Compare with Morris (1995:258).

On the spot, after the royal official has made the connection between the healing of his son and the precise words of Jesus (and the precise time that he spoke them), he comes to the precise 'insight' (see ἔγνω [Jn 4:53] and ἐπίστευσεν [Jn 4:53]) of who Jesus truly and really is (Carson 1991:239).⁷⁷ At that moment a 180 degree turn takes place within the royal official himself and within his whole household⁷⁸ (ἡ οἰκία αὐτοῦ ὅλη), a transformation interaction, a being born again in the true sense of the word (according to Jn 1:12–13; and 3:3; see Dietzfelbinger 2001:1.133). Ridderbos (1991:177) is thus correct when remarking that: "The 'absolute' statement 'he believed' (without an object) no longer denotes a single act of faith, as in v. 50, but conversion to a life of faith: 'they became believing,' adherents of Jesus in the deeper sense of the word" (also according to Morris 1995:259). Witherington (1995:128) remarks: "The use of the verb *pisteuo* without a direct object suggests a more substantial form of faith than mere miracle-working faith, yet the evangelist does not tell us this man had become a Christian". On the other side of this we find scholars like Schnelle (1998:98), who believe that: "*Der Basilikos und sein ganzes Haus* (vgl. *Ap. 10, 2; 11, 4; 16, 15.31; 18, 8*) *kommen zum Glauben, d.h. sie werden Christen*". Bultmann (1971:209) puts it yet another way when postulating: "For the Evangelist, however, this clearly means more than simply that 'he became a Christian'; it represents the step that leads from the preliminary stage of faith (v. 50) to faith proper". Morris (1995:259) confirms this while summarising: "He became a believer. The 'sign' transformed his faith into a greater faith".⁷⁹

77 See Schnackenburg (1968:461).

78 Dietzfelbinger (2001:1.133) is of the opinion that: "Dazu tritt die Frage, wie an diesem unterwegs erfolgenden Glaubensakt die gesamte Familie teilhaben kann. Die Vorstellung, dass sie, Frau, Kinder, Sklaven, dem Hausherrn entgegenging, ist kaum realistisch". In Acts we find many cases of whole families or households who come to faith (e.g. Cornelius and his household in Ac 10; Lydia in Ac 16:15; the prison guard in Ac 16:31; as well as Crispus in Ac 18:8).

79 In John 4:54 the author connects/links this specific miracle with the first miracle in Cana (Jn 2:23). Morris (1995:259) postulates: "Evidently he intends to link this sign with the preceding. In both cases there is divine power at work, but there is progression. There was a mighty miracle where Jesus was; here a healing at a distance. There was a transformation of *things* (water into wine); here life is given to *a boy* as good as dead." Beasley-Murray (1987:73) also sees the connection between the first miracle and the eventual resurrection of Lazarus when he remarks: "The healing of the boy is a sign of the power of Jesus to give life, which in the discourse that follows will be defined as 'eternal life' (Jn 5:24), and even life from the dead, resurrection life (Jn 5:21, 25–26, 28–29). Its appropriateness to the latter aspect is clear in the light of John 4:47—the boy was at the point of death".

We can thus agree with Schnelle (1998:98) that “*Nicht der Glaube schaut das Wunder, sondern er entsteht durch das Wunder*”.

In John 17:3 it is argued that those who recognise Jesus as the sent agent (Son) of God, are those who know God and who have received eternal life: αὕτη δέ ἐστιν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωὴ ἵνα γινώσκωσιν σέ τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεὸν καὶ ὃν ἀπέστειλας Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν. The moment that someone believes in God and his Son, that person becomes a child of God (Jn 1:12–13 ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι), making it possible to experience the spiritual reality of God and his family (Jn 3:1–8), and eventually to also experience life possibilities in eternal terms within the family (Jn 3:15–16). So a person has moved from a ‘death’ state of existence into a ‘life’ state of existence (according to Jn 5:24—μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν). Here knowledge and faith are thus embedded into the framework of soteriology (according to Thompson 1992:380–381). The correct knowledge and understanding of who Jesus is, leads to rebirth (Jn 1:12–13), and a whole new representation of reality. Van der Watt (2000 and 2005:101–128) argues that soteriology in the Gospel of John in actuality represents reality, and its resultant re-socialisation, within the new family of the King:

The act or moment of salvation is expressed in metaphorical terms as being born into *the family of the God*, or simply *of God*. By becoming a part of the (fictive) family of God, a person is therefore resocialized in terms of that family. This new society (God’s family) becomes the basic and determinative society towards which a person orientates him or herself. This resocialization is envisaged as becoming alive to God, becoming able to appreciate the spiritual reality, becoming able to function within a new social and existential framework, as is represented by Jesus.

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Suddenly the individual becomes part of a new social system; is reborn into the family of God (according to Jn 1:12–13). In ancient times birth played a very important part in the eventual determination of a person’s identity (according to Josephus *Ant.* 4.8.39 §289), honour, and social standing (Malina and Neyrey 1991:28); as well as for the anticipation of a person’s future social actions, in the sense that being born in a certain social context always leads in a certain direction (Malina and Neyrey 1995:143). In this same fashion, Rabbi Yose ben Halafta (130–160 CE) later remarked: “One who has become a proselyte is like a child newly born” (*b. Yebam.* 48b; according to 22a; 97b; *b. Bek.* 47a; also look at Köstenberger 2004:124). Rebirth was thus not only about reorientation, but also about a representation of reality, with its resultant re-socialisation within this new family of God.

In the narrative that we are studying it is not only the situation of sickness as an example par excellence of death (Jn 4:47, and 49), brokenness, and the loss of life possibilities being restored, but also about the spiritual healing, restoration and recovery of the entire household's creative potentiality (Jn 4:53). With this they also receive qualitative life possibilities within the family of God as they are now children of God (Jn 1:12–13; also according to Jn 17:1–8). In other words it could be argued that the situation of crisis and disorientation in the narrative eventually results—after the transformation interaction—in a narrative about reorientation and representation of reality, with the resulting life possibilities that develop from this.

With the above mentioned argument in mind, one could at this stage ask the question as to whether there may also be a suggestion of a possible *re-creational theology* in the Gospel of John? The God of Creation is after all the Source of all Life. Jesus also has this Creation-Life within him (Jn 1:4). What is more, is that Jesus is pictured in John as living in a very close associative relationship with the Creator-God (Jn 5:18, 19). This intimate relationship between Father and Son is especially clear in the context of the Son's ability (and mission objective—according to Jn 3:16; and 17:1–8) to give life in the same way as the Creator-God (Jn 5:20–21).⁸⁰ So Jesus is part of the re-creation process in the sense that he comes and offers a new type of life (and life possibilities) that is qualitatively different from the type of life that people have thus far existed in. This qualitative life that Jesus offers is not objective and separate from the person and his/her earthly existence; for, if that were so, we would only have been able to talk about the fact that Jesus creates new (eternal) life. The realised eschatology⁸¹ of the Gospel of John wants to permanently entwine these two (which previously was separate) dimensions of the earthly and the heavenly 'life'. John's new 'life', of which the children of God become a part, transforms the current earthly existence. At the precise moment when the spiritual life that Jesus offers come in contact with the brokenness of this material life, a transformation interaction takes place (as is seen more than once in the miracle healings). In the context of faith an eschatological life possibility is then realised for the believer. Van der Watt (2000a) is in other words correct when, arguing from within the family metaphor, he states that the believer receives a brand new identity and becomes a child of God when he/she is reborn (Jn 1:12, and 3:3). The believer moves from death to life (Jn 5:24); undergoing a metamorphosis from one state of existence or dimension to another (Jn 3:3; and 5:24). This *re-creational theology* is taken up in (and illustrated by) the healing

80 Compare Vellanickal (1977).

81 Compare Kümmel (1967:48–66, 60–66).

narratives: Jesus' healing actions transform the old and broken material life into a new life; and then not just a new life with new biological and socio-religious life possibilities for the royal official's son, but a re-creation of the whole household's eschatological possibilities (see Liess 2005:430). Jesus is able to do this because he is relationally and intimately connected to the Creator-God (Jn 5:18–23). In and through the healing narrative, the true identity of Jesus is revealed—he is the source of life (Jn 1:4, and 11:25); and that he, just like the Creator-God, can create life through *the speaking of a word* (Gn 1:3, 9; compare with Jn 1:11, 15, 24, and 30; see Köstenberger 2004:25). Already in the prologue to the gospel of John, Jesus' identity is inseparably linked to the Creator-God of Genesis (see Du Rand 2005:25; Brown 1966:4; Beasley Murray 1999:10; and Schnackenburg 1990:1.232). Here in this healing narrative that truth is merely illustrated (and thus proven). Jesus re-creates the crisis situation of brokenness and death (Jn 4:47, and 49) by creating new life and by restoring life possibilities (re-creating; Jn 4:50, 51, and 53; Schnackenburg [1990:467]). Du Rand (2005:25) is thus correct when he says that: “Accepting the Logos means life. God's ‘new creation’ through the Logos’ incarnation is illustrated by the unfolding of his glory (δόξα). [J]esus’ public appearances spell a *creatio continua*. He brings life ‘from above’. The term ‘from above’ directly relates to the creation theme”. Liess (2005:430) discusses the Old Testament understanding of the concept of death, remarking that: “*Der Tod tritt ein mit dem Aushauchen der Lebenskraft*”, and connecting this to the categories of Creation. In this context he then says: “*Damit wird der Vorgang des Sterbens in einer umgekehrten Analogie zum Schöpfungs Vorgang gesehen (Gen 2,7; 3,19; vgl. Ps 104,30)*”. The death of the royal official's son is thus linked to Creation in the sense that it is an analogue in opposition to Creation as it is associated with the loss of life. In this context of crisis and the loss of life, Jesus illustrates that he can re-create life just as the Creator-God can.

In John 5–10 Jesus also acts as the agent of the new creation at Jewish feasts, where he is sketched as the One who is the fulfilment of the Old Testament: Jesus is the bread of life (Jn 6:22–36, 47, and 58), the living water (Jn 6:35), the new Temple (Jn 2:19–22), and the new life of the ‘new creation’ (because he and the Father are one; according to Jn 10:30, and 36). In the Gospel of John Jesus thus functions as agent of Creation, as well as co-Creator (Du Rand 2005:26). But Jesus is more than just the fulfilment of Old Testament expectations, for he creates something new—a new family, with new life possibilities within this family (Van der Watt 2000a). Through material recreation (the miracle healing) he illustrates that he indeed has the ability to re-create spiritual life possibilities. So, when Jesus heals the royal official's son, he is in fact illustrating that he has the ability to create life; which, in order for him to be able to create life,

would also mean that God is intimately involved with him. When Jesus heals the royal official's son, he is in actuality illustrating his ability to (re)create life, a very crucial theological theme in the Gospel of John—as his ability to create life necessitates God's intimate involvement with him (Jn 5:19ff.). Jesus can only be a source of life if God as source of life is connected to him in one way or another. For, as the source of all life, he is the One that creates life and has the ability to even re-create it. The acts of healing thus serve, not only as an illustration of Jesus' re-creational abilities; but also illustrates the Father's close/intimate connection to (and involvement with) the Son. The miraculous transformation interaction (or act of healing) eventually lead to a change of the entire *representation of reality*: on the one hand the royal official's son has now received new life possibilities on socio-religious level, on the other hand the eschatological position of the whole family has changed. The miracle healing further reveals who Jesus truly is—the One that can re-create life with his words (just like the Creator-God) in the midst of disorientation, chaos, brokenness, and death. Thus we find here a representation of reality that can in the context of authentic faith, culminate in life possibilities within the new family of God. John not only uses family terms to explain this new relational reality, he also uses the everyday metaphors like bread⁸² (according to Jn 6:35), water (according to Jn 4:13–14), and a place to live (according to Jn 14:2) to describe the life possibilities within this family (see Van der Watt 2000a). It could be agreed with Anderson (2011: *ad loc*) that already in John's prologue, Jesus is presented as the one that continues “to bring order out of chaos in the lives of individuals and communities that are receptive and responsive to God's redeeming and liberating work . . .”

EXCURSUS: Realisation of life possibilities

Jesus gives socio-religious and eschatological life possibilities.

It is interesting to see that the word ζῆ and its inflections (in the previous contexts of the Gospel) up to this point, has been used by the author to refer to 'eternal and/or spiritual life' (see Jn 3:15–18, 3:36, and 4:10). Here, in John 4:50f., the word ζῆ is however, used to refer to 'physical and biological life': the royal official's son is physically dying, and Jesus restores his physical brokenness by healing him over/from a distance. The outcome was that the royal official and his entire household came to faith (Jn 4:53—καὶ ἐπίστευσεν αὐτὸς καὶ ἡ οἰκία αὐτοῦ ὅλη). In John 1:12 and 3:16 we saw that those who believe in him, receive eternal life (ζῆ) and become children of God. What we are thus seeing here, is how the σημεῖα as sign,

82 See Borgen (1959; 1981).

in reality illustrates that Jesus is the healer of human beings who come to believe in him. Put differently, in the context of faith, healing or restoration is realised. In the act of healing people we also find how the great theological themes in the Gospel flow into one another. This act of healing describes Jesus as the true life-giver for people on a spiritual level; so Jesus did not only heal or save the child from physical death and in the process restored only his biological functioning. Sickness had very prominent and crucial social and religious implications; inhibiting the individual's socio-religious interactive life possibilities. Through this act of healing, Jesus bridges the gap between the sick boy and his household, but also the gap between himself and the household. After the miraculous healing the whole household came to believe in the person of Jesus and so became part of the family of God (Jn 1:12). Although, Jesus gives life possibilities on a socio-religious level; he also gives eternal life and life possibilities, within the family of God, to those who believe in him (Jn 5:24). Within Johannine theology every unbeliever exists in a state of spiritual 'death'. If such a person were to start believing and be reborn (according to Jn 1:12–13) he/she will become part of God's family and will from that point on exist within a (spiritual) 'life'/'restorative' state of existence (Jn 5:24–26).⁸³ Schnackenburg (1990:464) is therefore correct when he says that here we have an example of the truth that was highlighted in John 3:15f., 36 and further: although, at first glance, this healing narrative is about the restoration of physical life; it actually points to Jesus' ability to restore spiritual life possibilities within the family of God. This narrative thus does not, in the first place, just talk about a physical/biological healing; theologically it is also connected to the concepts of faith, knowledge, life, and revelation (according to the discussion on Jn 4:53 above). It is clear that there is a connection and relational link between the specific act of healing and the gift of eternal life—the sickness is the crisis or the opportunity for revelation, the act of healing the vehicle, faith and knowledge the key, and eternal life the final goal.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus' miraculous deeds serve as signs to show who he is and where he really comes from (Jn 5:36; and 10:25). Miracles give insight

83 Translation: ²⁴"Most assuredly I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. ²⁵Most assuredly I say to you, that an hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those having heard shall live. ²⁶For just as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, . . ."

into (and knowledge of) who he really is. Miracles also serve as signs of the salvation that Jesus brings (Jn 9:1, 39; and 6:23), leading people to true faith (Jn 10:38; 12:37; and 20:30). Thompson (1992:379) is thus correct when saying: "Jesus' glory is revealed in the signs, and those who see the glory of Jesus (cf. Jn 1:14) have grasped the secret of his person and identity". Naturally, Jesus is more than the signs that he gives; Jesus himself is the miracle that comes from God; the living water (Jn 4:10, and 13–14); the bread of life (Jn 6:35); the resurrection and the life (Jn 11:25); and thereof and for the world (Jn 9:35).⁸⁴ The faith that Jesus desires is more than just faith in his miraculous deeds; he desires faith in him as the gift from God that became human (Jn 4:10; and 6:29, 33). In this sense there is a connection between the concepts 'knowledge' and 'faith'; for the correct knowledge of him leads to the correct faith in him and in who he is. Ridderbos (1991:177) is therefore right when he says that, inherent to this healing narrative, we find a unique motive woven into the fabric of the narrative to enable the reader to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and can receive eternal life by believing in his name.⁸⁵ Ridderbos would, in other words, have agreed that there is a connection between healing, (eternal) life, and faith. Jesus gives multi-dimensional life back to the child who was dying (biologically, socially, religiously, and eschatologically), and eventually also gives eschatological life possibilities against the backdrop of true faith. Within the context of faith, restoration is realised (possibly also the reason why there is no hint of restoration in John 13–17 in the Jesus-group; almost as if healing and restoration has already been realised there). So this healing narrative is not, in the first place, about the winning back of biological and socio-religious life; this narrative is primarily about a household coming to faith in Jesus by understanding and knowing who he truly is. It is about their receiving of eternal life and the creation of eschatological life possibilities within the family of God. Biological and socio-religious life is always secondary to the higher reality of Jesus' being sent to the world, bringing with him a new order and new life. In John 5:21 we see that Jesus says: "ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ἐγείρει τοὺς νεκροὺς

84 Ridderbos (1991:177) says that miracles/wonders are inextricably linked to Jesus' mission, witness (Jn 5:36), redemption (Jn 9:1, 39), and the way in which he leads people to faith (and life; Jn 20:30–31).

85 Compare with John 20:31: ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται ἵνα πιστεύ[ς]ητε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ. Which can be translated as: "... but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in abundance".

καὶ ζωοποιεῖ, οὕτως καὶ ὁ υἱὸς οὕς θέλει ζωοποιεῖ.⁸⁶ Jesus gives life in the same way that the Creator-God gives life; Jesus does what he has seen the Father do (Jn 5:19). In the same way that the Father has life in Himself, Jesus the Son, also has life within himself which he gives to whomever he wishes (Jn 5:26): ὥστερ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ἔχει ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, οὕτως καὶ τῷ υἱῷ ἔδωκεν ζωὴν ἔχειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ.

3.3.1 *The Relationship between the Healing Narrative and the so-called Universal Godly Narrative*

The connection between healing and (eternal) life can also be explained with the correct understanding of the Universal Godly Narrative that is woven into the very fibre of the Gospel. In other words, this particular healing narrative can be viewed as a drama being played out against the backdrop decor of that which Van der Watt (2000a:6ff.) calls the Universal Godly Narrative (UGN). According to Van der Watt, the Gospel has a very clear message—that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that he has been sent to the world to save people from the grip of Satan by giving them everlasting life.⁸⁷ This is a message in which the Godly reality becomes visibly manifested in this physical world. It is a message that is communicated in different ways throughout the whole Gospel—artfully woven into the narrative. The public appearances and words of Jesus unfold systematically throughout the entire Gospel. In one text we read that it was God who sent Jesus to earth. In another we read about his true identity. In yet another text we read about the way in which he protects and cares for believers; still another tells us about the way in which he taught the believers (or the faithful); and in a few places we find all these motives together within the same text and context developing in terms of each other. Together these motives—and many others as well—give us a broad perspective on both the ministry of Jesus, as well as the way in which the people around him gave meaning to it and interpreted them. This is the theological revelation into which the Gospel is embedded (Van der Watt 2000a:7). The UGN forms the theological basis for all of the narratives and teachings in the Gospel. In the appearances and words of people (including Jesus'), the bigger “multi-dimensional” spiritual drama also becomes clear. It can be compared

86 ²¹For as the Father raises up the dead and gives life, thus also the Son gives life to whom He wills.

87 Beasley Murray (1987:51) is of the opinion that the Gospel can be summarised with the words: “It originates in the love of God for a disobedient world, it centres in the giving of the only Son to and for the world, and its end is that people may not be lost but live under the sovereignty of God”.

with the modern film “The Matrix”, in which earthly events are not all that it’s about. According to the film all earthly events stand in direct relation with (and are a direct result of) the dynamic multi-dimensional reality that is being played out behind this visible screen. In the same way, Jesus heals the royal official’s son from a distance. The question is: how did he do it? Who is he? And the answer is that he has come from “above”, and that—like the Father—he can give life to whomever he wishes; because this life-giving ability has been given to him by the Father (Jn 5:19–21). So the lines of the two narratives cross and weave into each other, and then have to be understood in terms of each other. The healing narratives are, in other words, not written in the first place for the sake of the narrative itself, but with a specific aim in mind. After all, as we read in John 20:31, all these signs have been written about in order for people to be able to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and can receive everlasting life through this belief in his name. But to be able to believe that, the potential believer still has to understand something of Jesus the protagonist; of who the One is that sent him and why; and whom the antagonist is and what he/she does. The earthly drama (and events) is therefore taken up into (and is actually subservient to) the bigger cosmic narrative/drama (see Reinhartz 1992; 2001).

The healing narratives in the Gospel are not told in the first instance for the sake of the narratives themselves; they stand in service to the bigger cosmic narrative in which: God has sent his Son from the eternal and invisible or heavenly sphere to the temporary, visible, earthly sphere (Jn 3:16); in order to reveal his love to the human race and to reunite them with himself (Jn 1:12; and 3:16); by saving them from their “death” state of existence in the sphere of influence and power of the ruler of this world (Jn 5:24); so that they may enjoy life in abundance (Jn 10:10); with faith in, and knowledge about, God and his Son being prerequisites for the life possibilities within the family of God; in this regard, God nourishes, protects, leads, and teaches his children as a father would do with his children; but, on the other side of this coin, unbelief leads to spiritual death and to judgement (according to Jn 9:41; and 12:40), as well as to a lack of life possibilities within the family of God (according to Jn 1:12).

3.4 Summary and Conclusion

In the narrative of the Gospel of John there are two prominent families—the family of God (Jn 1:12), and the family of Satan (Jn 8:44). This is in line with the Johannine dualistic thought process where life and death, truth and lie, light and dark, underneath and above, and faith and unbelief are antithetically

placed opposite each other.⁸⁸ God is the Creator-God and the God of Life, Light, and Truth; whereas Satan is the father of death, ‘darkness’ and the lie. All unbelieving people are actually existing in a “death” state of existence (according to Jn 5:24); they are children of the devil and they bow beneath his rule (according to Jn 8:44). Unbelievers do not know the Father or the Son, or the rest of their family. So there is a fundamental gap between God, his Son, and their family (the believers/faithful) on the one hand; and the children of Satan on the other. There is no mention of life possibilities for the unbeliever, precisely because they exist in a “death” state (Jn 5:24). For, where there is death, there is no life (according to Ec 9:4); and where there is death, God is also not to be found. For this reason we can argue that there is no relationship possible between God and the children of Satan. We can state that there are signs of a “sick”, unhealthy, and broken relational reality—a reality that results in the sending of the great Transformation agent (Jn 3:16). There is, in other words, a relational break—even worse, a dead relationship between God and unbelievers. And, without the “correct” knowledge of who Jesus is, there can be no “correct” faith in him or in his Father. The Gospel of John was written with a specific aim in mind (according to Jn 20:30–31); and, in the process, certain narratives are used to serve this so-called Universal Godly Narrative.

In order to illustrate that Jesus is the true source of life and its resultant qualitative life possibilities (Jn 1:4; and 11:25), the author uses a *crisis narrative* from his own context that exemplifies death, brokenness, and the loss of life possibilities. In this specific healing narrative, the royal official approaches Jesus in a desperate attempt to restore the brokenness of his dying son (Jn 4:47, and 49). Against the backdrop of the Johannine dualism death and life are antithetic partners. The primary motive of the author can be understood against the background of the ‘life’ motive (Jn 20:30–31). Consequently, as Jesus is approached by the royal official in order to step into this crisis of death with life as the *Godly Transformation Agent*, the entire episode is in actuality taking place against the backdrop of the Universal Godly Narrative; and, suddenly, the narrative becomes a *σημεία*, a sign which is actually just pointing to the bigger cosmic narrative (and conflict) playing out in the Gospel. The reader already

88 The idea of “contrast reasoning” (according to Van der Watt 2000a) is a more accurate theological description than the idea of “dualism” (see Du Rand 1990). The reason being that the two parts that are standing in opposition to each other are not always evenly “weighted”—light is stronger than darkness; life is stronger than death; God is stronger than the devil; etc. Thus, where there is mention of dualism, the presupposition is that the actual motivation/idea is contrast—in terms of the concepts/phrases and their meanings as discussed above.

knows that the reality of biological and socio-religious death is but one dimension of death represented in the Gospel. The royal official and his entire household are, in reality, existing within a 'death' state of existence (according to Jn 5:19ff.), just like the rest of the unbelieving human race that did not accept, acknowledge or believe in him (Jn 1:10–11). In just this manner the royal official did not believe in him and did not have any insight into who he truly was. So the man's initial faith was more a faith born of desperation because of his crisis rather than being an authentic faith in who Jesus truly was. The concepts of sin and death are also connected to the abovementioned concepts. Sin in the Gospel is not described in the first instance in terms of individual sins; no, sin is rather defined in terms of the person's relationship with (and stance towards) God and his agent—Jesus (according to Van der Watt 2000a). Sin thus means not being in a relationship with God, and to therefore be a slave of sin under the rule of the ruler of this world; existing in 'darkness' and in lies. For this reason such people are viewed and described as 'dead' (in the spiritual sense; Jn 5:24; and 1 Jn 3:14–15).

The royal official begs (pleads desperately) with Jesus to go with him, in order to save his son from death (to stop his son from dying). In a dramatic and unexpected way, Jesus sends the man back into the context of the crisis, the context where death is actively present. The only thing that the man can take with him are the words that Jesus spoke—ὁ υἱός σου ζῇ (according to Jn 4:50). The royal official's meeting up with his servants accentuates the reality of the miraculous *transformation interaction*. The son lives! After the man realises that his son became well again (was healed) at precisely the moment that Jesus spoke those words, he and his whole household came to faith in Jesus (Jn 4:53). The *crisis and disorientation situation* of death, after the *transformation interaction*, thus leads to a *reorientation* and to a new *representation of reality*; with the resultant qualitative *life possibilities*. On the level of the UGN the reader realises that Jesus, like the Creator-God (according to Gn 1), can create life by just speaking a word. In John 20:29 Jesus says μακάριοι οἱ μὴ ἰδόντες καὶ πιστεύσαντες. Those that come to faith on the basis of the words that are a witness to him, and in this way receive everlasting life (Jn 20:29, and 30–31), will know that the words of Jesus lead to true and eternal life. In the healing narrative Jesus' life-giving abilities are highlighted in the fact that, just after his saying of the words ὁ υἱός σου ζῇ (Jn 4:50), the son is healed and given back life. With this the intimate relationship and unity between the Creator-God of Genesis and Jesus is affirmed (according to Jn 1:1ff.; and 5:19ff.). According to the UGN it is one of the primary soteriological tasks of the Son to *give life* to whomever he chooses (Jn 3:16; and 5:19–29); once again accentuating the intimate relationship between Father and Son, as well as the Son's ability to give

life. But, with this act of healing, Jesus does not only restore or re-create biological and socio-religious life possibilities; he is also (and especially) restoring and re-creating eschatological life possibilities within God's new family. In the Gospel of John Jesus 'heals' or *restores*⁸⁹ the broken relationship between God and man; he brings new life possibilities into being; and for those that believe in him he gives everlasting life and the privilege of becoming a child of God (Jn 1:12). They have thus already moved from death to life (Jn 5:24). Put in a different way—in the context of crisis, death, and *disorientation* Jesus *reorients* the person and creates *new life possibilities* within God's new family. This includes the *re-presentation of the whole of reality*; (1) from crisis, death, and disorientation, to (2) reorientation, a re-presentation of reality, as well as new life possibilities within God's new family.

Through the use of the healing narrative as *semeion*, the author of the Gospel of John succeeds in letting the most important theological themes of the Gospel flow into one another: in the context of the healing narrative, both redemption and re-creation (or new life) are connected to one another and are worked out in terms of one another. The specific healing narrative is obviously in service to the Universal Godly Narrative—the theological basis for all the narratives and teachings. Therefore it can be argued that the concepts of *healing*, *re-creation*, *(eternal) life*, *redemption/salvation*, *knowledge* and *faith* are all theologically and irrevocably linked to one another in/through this narrative.

89 *Restore* is defined as: (1) to give back, return; (2) to put or bring back into existence or use (as quoted in Merriam-Webster, I. [1996, c1993: *ad loc*]. *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*. 10th Edition. Springfield: Merriam-Webster. Jesus gives/grants both biological and socio-religious life to the son who had lost these back to him. Jesus also gives/grants eschatological life possibilities to the whole family; who had either lost it, or who had never had it to begin with.

The Healing of the Lame Man: An Exegetic Study of John 5:1–9 within the Context of 5:1–47

Macro-Analysis of John 5:1–47

4.1 Positioning of the Text within the Context of the Whole

If the context of the gospel as a whole is considered, the close proximity of two specific healings, that of the nobleman's son (4:43–54) and that of the lame man (5:1–47), is very striking. It is therefore not without warrant that some attention is paid to the literary positioning of these healing narratives.

In the Gospel of John, literary breaks or transitions are indicated by the term *μετὰ ταῦτα*.¹ Within the current context, the term marks the beginning of a new narrative or episode. According to Culpepper (1993:196), 5:1 marks an important transition in the gospel for three reasons: the use of *μετὰ ταῦτα*; the reference to a Jewish festival; and a change in space. He also rightly points out that the two relevant miracle narratives are followed by dialogue texts and revelatory monologues.² Structurally speaking, the two healing narratives can be placed within the framework of 1:19–12:50, which deals with Jesus' public ministry to the world (Joh 1–12). The theme of life, which depicts Jesus as the source of life, becomes a central theme in John 1–4. This theme is further developed in subsequent chapters against the background of a growing conflict between Jesus and the Jews—a conflict that intensifies from chapter 5 onwards.³

1 This term appears as follows in the Gospel: On the episodic level: 3:22 (from Jerusalem to the hinterland), 5:1 (from Galilee to Jerusalem), 6:1 (across the sea of Galilee), 7:1 (from Galilee to Jerusalem), 21:1 (in Galilee); and on the scenic level: 2:12 (from Cana to Capernaum), 5:14 (a change of characters and on way to the temple), 19:28 (transition from crucifixion to death), 19:38 (transition from death to burial).

2 See Culpepper (1983:73).

3 See the division of Beasley-Murray (1987: *ad loc*): "A. 1:19–51 *Witnesses about Jesus*: John the Baptist and first disciples; B. 2:1–4:42 *Two signs of a new order*: water into wine and purification of the temple; Nicodemus discourse (chpt 3) linked to the temple. Samaritan discourse (chpt 4) linked to wine; C. 4:43–5:47 *Jesus mediates life and judgment*; D. 6:1–7:1 *Jesus is the bread of life*; E. 7:1–8:59 *Jesus is life's water and Light*; F. 9:1–10:42 *Jesus, Light and Shepherd*; G. 11:1–54 *Jesus, resurrection and life*; H. 11:55–12:50 *Jesus, king of life, Defeats death*."

Ashton (1994:150) is of the opinion that John 5 marks the beginning of a series of challenges from ‘the Jews,’ who feature prominently in the subsequent six chapters. According to Ashton (1995:150–151), there are both a clear change in atmosphere and signs of a growing tension between Jesus and the Jews, eventually culminating in his death. This view accords well with that of Culpepper (1983:91), who argues that the gospel’s plot takes an interesting turn from chapter 5 onward, and that the Jews start to move prominently to the foreground from then on. Culpepper (1983:91) notes that: “The dramatic power of the rest of the gospel is built around this conflict.” Ridderbos (1997:181) confirms the latter when he says: “Starting with ch.5 there is a clear shift in the Gospel’s story. The report of Jesus’ self-revelation in chs. 2–4 continues with an ever increasing and deepening wealth of topics and motives.”

Beasley-Murray (1987:67, 70) points out that the healing narrative of chapter 5 culminates in a *discourse* which focuses on the theme: “Jesus as mediator of Life, but who also Judges.” He sees the two signs at Cana as introductory narratives to the discourse of chapters 3 and 4. The same argument holds that *the theme developed in the discourse of 5:17–47, which revolves around Jesus as the One who gives life (vgl. 5:21) and the Jews’ growing opposition against it, inseparably connects the two healing narratives (4:46–54 and 5:1–9).*⁴ Stibbe (1993:73)⁵ argues that chapters 2–4 represent Jesus’ first circular movement, while chapters 5–10 represent Jesus’ second circular movement:

- First route: Cana—Jerusalem—Cana
- Second route: Jerusalem—Galilee—Jerusalem.

The following diagram illustrates how the foregoing is related to the healing narratives:

4 See other scholars with similar points of view: Dodd (1968:318); Bultmann (1971:203); Brown (1968:197). Culpepper (1983:91) argues that chapter 5 displays a new development of the Gospel’s plot. Here, the plot intensifies around the identity of Jesus. The Jewish opposition increasingly escalates and the foundation of the conflict is expounded. The issue at hand is whether the locus of revelation should be identified with Jesus or the law. Champions of the Torah’s absolute authority argue that Jesus had both transgressed against the law and committed blasphemy (cf. 5:18). They opine that such behaviour disqualifies and disables Jesus from being someone who can offer revelation (or truth). Jesus summons witnesses for his cause: His Father; John the Baptist; his works; Scriptures’ witness of him and Moses. Culpepper (1983:91) holds that the dramatic power of the remainder of the gospel is built around this conflict.

5 Cf. Hwang (2004:69–76).

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- *Jerusalem: The healing of the lame man* at Bethesda (5:1–18)
 - *Galilee: Jesus feeds the crowd* (6:1–15)
 - *Galilee: Jesus walks on water* (6:16–21)
 - *Jerusalem: The healing of the blind man* (9:1–8).

This diagram clearly shows that both healings in this section (chapters 5–10) takes place in Jerusalem, the centre of socio-religious opposition.⁶

Köstenberger (2004:173) reminds us that Jesus is depicted as the bread of life in John 6:48, something his own disciples struggled to understand (cf. 6:60–70).

Chapter 7:1–52 centres on/around issues of faith and the lack thereof.

Chapter 8:12–59 is about the nature of both Jesus' and the Jews' respective relationships with God, which ultimately culminates in an attempt to stone Jesus (8:59), because he refers to God as his own Father (cf. 8:49–51).

In chapter 9, Jesus heals the blind man and grants him new existential possibilities. Acting in a completely opposite way, the Jews cast out the blind man and fail to show him any love (9:34).

In chapter 10, Jesus is painted as the good shepherd, who lays down his life for his sheep (10:14). In the process, Jesus is contrasted with the Jews, who, like thieves and robbers, manage to destroy life possibilities (10:8–10).⁷

4.1.1 *Analysis of the Text's Build up*⁸

The analysis of the build-up of the text is presented here to assist the exegete in better understanding the text's basic train of thought.⁹

6 It is commonly accepted that the Gospel was written after the fall of the temple in 70 CE. In this context, Culpepper (1983:148) notes that the narrator would repeatedly place stories of Jesus within the context of a Jewish festival. He notes that "[A]t each festival Jesus does or says things that show that He is the fulfilment of what is celebrated during the particular festival." Another important issue is to recognise how the growing opposition of the Jews increases heavily in this passage. The healing narratives are then narratologically built around the development of this internal tension. See Culpepper (1983:196).

7 It is within this context that the argument will be made that the gospel combines healing with the creation of (eternal) life (and its associated life possibilities) and that this theme represents one of the more dominant motives in the gospel.

8 The Addendum includes a comprehensive analysis of the text's composition, including the interrelatedness of various phrases.

9 Cf. Hwang (2004), who, besides taking on a very impressive narrative-critical study of the miracles in John, also discusses John's structure.

4.1.1.1 Summary of the Build up

According to the analysis of the text's build up, the following Sections and Phrases can be identified and structured (cf. Hwang 2004:76):

TABLE 6 *A subdivision of John 5:1–18*

Cluster	Colon	Theme
A (1)	1–4	Jesus and sick people
B (2)	5–11	Jesus heals the lame man
C (1)	12–17	The Jews question the man
D (2)	18–21	Jesus warns, man betrays
E (3)	22–24	The Jewish conspiracy to kill Jesus

This passage (5:1–18) can be divided into two main sections:

- Section A–B (chapter 5:1–9a)¹⁰—Healing narrative
- Section C–E (chapter 5:9b–18)—Conflictual conversations

The first section (5:1–9a) describes the healing itself. The narrator takes the reader from a general situation to a more specific one.

He starts off by listing those sick people present at the bath of Bethesda and then zooms in on a man who had, by that time, already been sick for 38 years.

The second section (5:9b–18) introduces a conflict narrative, with which the narrator attempts to reveal the Jews' animosity toward Jesus. The subject matter of the conflict is the desecration of the Sabbath. This section develops the intrigue around the Jewish conspiracy to kill Jesus.¹¹

Chapter 5:19–47 deals with Jesus' response to Jewish opposition.¹² Chapter 5:19–30 is closely related to 5:17 and deals with the theme of Jesus as a life-giver and judge.¹³ The discourse that follows in 5:19–30 is crucial to the construction of the entire Gospel. Jesus declares in 5:19 that he doesn't do anything

10 See Beasley-Murray (1987:71); Witherington (1995:134) and Ridderbos (1992:184) for discussions on the structure of the pericope.

11 Carson (1991:247).

12 See Carson (1991:246). However, he views 5:16–47 as a unit.

13 Beasley-Murray (1987:72).

if it wasn't shown to him by the Father.¹⁴ The Father has life within him, so too the Son has life within Him (5:21; 26). Structurally, the current healing narrative (5:1–18) must be read with 5:19–30. The latter section contains a discourse where Jesus speaks about life and judgment (cf. 5:21; 24, 25; 26; 27; 28–29).¹⁵

Since, on a semantic level, these themes are very closely related to the preceding healing narrative, a closer exegetical look at *both* sections (5:1–18 and 5:19–30) is certainly justified.

4.2 Detail-Analysis of John 5:1–9¹⁶

4.2.1 *An Exegetical Study of John 5:1–4*

In this narrative, the author sketches Jesus as going up¹⁷ to Jerusalem in the midst of a Jewish festival (5:1—Μετά ταῦτα ἦν ἑορτὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ ἀνέβη Ἰησοῦς εἰς Ἱερουσόλυμα).¹⁸ John uses the term “Μετά ταῦτα” to indicate a transition to this new episode (Ridderbos 1997:184). A change in physical space is

14 Ridderbos (1997:191).

15 Cf. Moloney (1998:176).

16 Collins (1990:21) points to Bultmann and Martyn, who both argued that there are obvious agreements between the healing stories in John 5:1–18 and 9:1–34 respectively. They both share a clear pattern: [1] Both start with a narrative of a miracle (5:1–9b; 9:1–7) [2] Both display the threefold scheme of a series illness (5:5; 9:1)—stereotypical command (5:8; 9:7a)—and the effect (5:9; 9:7b). Both miracle narratives result in challenges between Jesus and the Jesus leaders. Both healings occur within the context of the violation of Sabbatical laws (5:9b, 10, 16, 18; 9:4, 16). Both narratives reflect the negative relationship between the Christian community and the Jewish synagogue. In both narratives, Jesus meets the relevant person after having healed him. Like Jesus reveals himself to Nicodemus (1:51) and the Samaritan woman (4:26), he also reveals himself to these men (5:37; 9:35v.) In Joh 9:35v., for instance, Jesus enquires about the man's faith. Jesus invites him to confess his faith on an even deeper level. The man's reaction indicates progression. He confesses that Jesus is Lord and worships him. Conversely, the lame man represents those Jews who not only saw, but also accepted, Jesus' works, without choosing in his favour; a choice which is tantamount to betrayal (5:15). Those who (re)act in such manner, are positioning themselves on the side of the Jews who persecuted Jesus (5:16). Collins (1990:23) concludes: “Thus both the lame man and the blind man are representative figures in the tradition of the Fourth Gospel, but they are antithetically symbolical to the point that one cannot be understood without the other.”

17 Köstenberger (2004:177) notices: “It was customary for Jews at any place and any elevation in Palestine to use the expression going ‘up’ to Jerusalem.”

18 It is not entirely clear which festival is meant. Most scholars agree that there is no definite article before ἑορτῇ. That is why it is simply translated as ‘a festival’. See Barrett (1978:250) Beasley—Murray (1987:69); Ridderbos (1997:184) Carson (1991:241).

also mentioned (Keener 2003:634).¹⁹ There were three important Jewish festivals that required Jewish men to travel to Jerusalem, namely Pesach (Passover), Shavuot (the Feast of Weeks) and Sukkot (the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles). The act of healing and the Jesus-event are deliberately painted against the background of a Jewish festival. Such festivals were important happenings in the socio-religious lives of Jews and bore witness to God's historic acts of salvation. When John then sketches Jesus as a healer, he does it in such a way that Jesus is directly linked to God's acts of salvation and Israel's expectations (Köstenberger 2004:62).

EXCURSUS: Jewish festivals

It is not clear precisely which festival is meant here (Ridderbos 1997:184; Keener 2003:635; Morris 1995:265; Carson 1991:241). John depicts Jesus as the fulfilment of Old Testament expectations. Oftentimes, the healing acts of Jesus occur during a Jewish festival, which is the author's way of illustrating that Jesus is the fulfilment of the Jewish expectation applicable to that feast (cf. Joh 9). For this reason, it is necessary to provide a short exposition of Jewish festivals contemporaneous with the public ministry of Jesus. Hendriksen (1976:188) supplies the following exposition of Jewish festivals during the time Jesus. The exposition covers the period from his baptism to the descent of the Holy Spirit:

TABLE 7 *Jewish Festivals and Times*

Year	March	April	May	October	December
26 nC					Dedication
27 nC	Purim (2:13,23)	Passover	Pentecost	Tabernacles	Dedication (4:34)
28 nC	Purim (5:1)	Passover	Pentecost	Tabernacles	Dedication
29 nC	Purim (6:4)	Passover	Pentecost	Tabernacles (7:2,37)	Dedication (10:22,23)
30 nC	Purim (12:1;13:1; 19:14)	Passover	Pentecost (Hand 2:1)		

TABLE ADAPTED FROM HENDRIKSEN [1976:188]

19 Keener (2003:634) points to the typical transition between chapters 4 and 5, where John (characteristically) leaves chronological and geographical gaps (cf. 7:2; 10:22; 11:55).

Köstenberger (2004:177) chooses in favour of the feast of Tabernacles, which, in the year 31 CE, took place during 21–28 October. He maintains that the current narrative and the preceding Passover episode were possibly separated by no less than one-and-a-half years. His choice of the Feast of Tabernacles rests upon the argument “that some MSS have ‘the’ festival of the Jews, the conventional name for Tabernacles (cf. 1 Kgs 8:2, 65; 12:32; 2 Chr 5:3; 7:8; Neh 8:14, 18; Ps 81:3; Ez 45:25).” According to Hendriksen (1976:188), on the other hand, it is obvious that, in all probability, the festival of 5:1 doesn’t refer to the year 26 CE or even 27 CE, since 4:34 takes us to December of 27 CE. Rather, the Passover in 6:4 probably refers to 28 CE. As such, 5:1, in all likelihood, has the Purim of the same year in mind. Hendriksen then argues: 1. Jesus leaves Judea for certain reasons (cf. 4:1–3, 43, 44) and would not have been able to return to Jerusalem so quickly, unless there was a pilgrimage festival. 2. Purim was not a pilgrimage festival. Rather, it was celebrated in the local synagogue by reading from the book of Esther amidst great joy. 3. The Passover referred to in 6:4 marks the end of the Galilean ministry. The argument is that this Passover could not have happened after 28 CE, since all these events would then have taken place within a time span of four months, which is highly unlikely. If the festival of 5:1 is neither the Purim nor the Passover of 28 CE, it follows that 5:1 must be referring to a festival that took place during 29 CE. 4. The conclusion is then made that, if indeed it should be seen as a pilgrimage festival, the reference in 5:1 must have been to one of the three Jewish pilgrimage festivals of 29 CE. 5. For these reasons and because of the tradition of Irenaeus, he chooses in favour of Passover (See Hendriksen 1976:189). Because of the reversed order of chapters 5 and 6, Carson (1991:240) and Bultmann (1971:240) also opts for Passover. According to Köstenberger (2004:177), this is unlikely, since the author explicitly mentions Passover in other literary context. Most scholars are thus unsure about the precise festival in view here (Keener 2003:635; cf. Ridderbos 1997:184). Whatever the actual case may be, Jewish festivals were times during which the socio-religious system and its rules intensified (Neyrey 1991:132). Examining the current healing act against the background of such an intensified situation will undoubtedly bring interesting new perspectives and dynamics to the fore. Such implications are explored below.

4.2.1.1 Jerusalem as the Centre of the Socio-Religious System

Jerusalem and the temple can be viewed as the centre of the socio-religious system of the day. Newman (1997:562) notes:

Not only was Jerusalem thought to be the ‘center,’ or ‘navel,’ of the whole earth (Ezek 5:5; 38:12; *1 Enoch* 26:1; *Jub.* 8:11, 19) but also ideal figurations of this holy city, this Zion, become stock symbols for Jewish worship and eschatology. Jewish dreams of what ought to be and what would be were uniquely tied to this specific plot of land (Gowan). Jerusalem, or Zion, thus replaced Sinai as the mountain of Yahweh’s presence (Levenson).

NEWMAN 1997:561

Jerusalem has a relatively negative connotative meaning in John, seeing as it time and again appears as the central hub from whence the Jews and their opposition originate. In keeping with this basic idea, Laney (1992:48) maintains that Jesus is depicted as being unhappy with the corruption and misguided focus of the religious system of the Jews. Van der Watt (2005:106) (powerfully) drives the point home: “The criticism against the disciples of Moses is focused: They do not worship God any longer—their religion is without God. They have not seen or heard God (8:47), and they do not know him (8:19, 54–55; 15:21; 17:25), because they are spiritually dead (5:24), irrespective of their socio-religious zeal.” According to John, the Jews are blind without even knowing it (9:27–41). In 2:16, Jesus objects to the operational practices of the Jerusalem temple: μή ποιεῖτε τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς μου οἶκον ἐμπορίου. Among other things, then, John uses this reality to justify the need for the Son’s mission. The Jews, as well as the entire world, needed salvation, ‘light’ and life (1:5–13) and expected a saviour (Van der Watt 2005:108). It is against this background that the author depicts one of the Baptist’s functions: In 1:19, the author mentions that the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to question Jesus (1:19—οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεῖς καὶ Λευίτας ἵνα ἐρωτήσωσιν αὐτόν· σὺ τίς εἶ;). In 1:23, John answers ἔφη ἐγὼ φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· εὐθύνετε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, καθὼς εἶπεν Ἡσαΐας ὁ προφήτης. Here, John applies the words of Isaiah 40:3 to himself. The Baptist thus introduces himself as the one who announces (from the wilderness) the good news that God is about to deliver his people from the state of slavery they presently find themselves in, just like he did in the time of Moses (Keener 1993:266). Traditionally, the wilderness is “the place of God’s gathering and deliverance of his people from slavery in Egypt” (Köstenberger 2004:62). It is against the backdrop of John’s voice, sounding from the wilderness, that Laney (1992:48) postulates: “The religious establishment of first-century Judaism was corrupt. The voice has abandoned Jerusalem and was calling out in the desert.” It is no coincidence, then, that Jesus and the Jews repeatedly bumped heads in and around Jerusalem, the focal point of the socio-religious system of the time. Within the context of the current narrative, Jesus enters a danger zone, where the representatives of the socio-religious

system are present in concentrated numbers. The reader can already anticipate a potential conflict situation, marked by the challenging and defending of honour.

The nature and dynamic of this conflict become apparent when the socio-religious cartography of the Jews is understood. According to Neyrey (1991:271vv.), a person structured and arranged himself and his world through a process of defining himself and others (See also Malina and Neyrey 1991:132).²⁰ As such, the ancient socio-religious community had 'maps' of and 'borders' around time, objects, places, persons, diets and purity. They believed that God was holy and that he had, during creation already, indicated how to structure the world and everything therein.²¹ There was "a place for everything and everything in its place . . . [J]ews could order space in terms of progressive degrees of holiness" (Neyrey 1991:278). The clearest example hereof comes from *m. Kelim*:

1. The land of Israel is holier than any other land on earth . . .
2. The cities (of Israel) are even holier . . .
3. The space within the walls (of Jerusalem) is even holier . . .
4. The Temple Mount is even holier . . .
5. The Rampart is even holier . . .
6. The courtyard of the Women is even holier . . .
7. The courtyard of the Israelites is even holier . . .
8. The courtyard of the Priests is even holier . . .
9. The space between the porch and the Altar is even holier . . .
10. The Sanctuary is even holier . . .
11. The Holy of Holies is even holier . . .

Thus, the macro-map of places clearly distinguished ten intensifying levels of holiness. It is interesting to note that Gentiles or 'the world' do not even feature on the map. In this light, the remark in 3:16 that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son . . .," is an utterly radical statement. That which was 'out of place,' was seen as being unclean. God is thus described as the One who has love for those who, according to the Jewish cartography, were unclean: The *map of persons* is linked to the map of places, which betrayed a clear hierarchical and structural composition (Neyrey 1991:279).²² Eunuchs were

²⁰ See Berger and Luckmann (1966).

²¹ See Neyrey (1991:277).

²² This map of persons comes from t. Meg. 2.7. The literary context discusses who may or may not read from the Esther scroll.

tenth on the list of 'status' and priests were first. Gentiles do not even feature on the map. Priests and Levites were welcome in the sanctuary, but Israelite eunuchs were not allowed in that space (Neyrey 1991:279).

1. Priests
2. Levites
3. Israelite men
4. Proselytes
5. Freed slaves
6. Disqualified priests
7. Temple slaves (*Netzims*)
8. Bastards (*Mamzers*)
9. Men with damaged reproductive organs
10. Eunuchs.

There was also a macro-map of time (Neyrey 1991:279):

1. Sabbath
2. Pesach (Passover)
3. Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)
4. Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles)
5. Festival days
6. Rosh Hashanah (Feast of New Year)
7. Days of fasting
8. Feast of Purim
9. Mid-festival days

During holy times (like the Sabbath), the application of both purity laws and maps of purity, was intensified. Neyrey (1991: *ad loc*) notes: "The effort to understand the social and cultural meanings of 'clean' and 'unclean' leads a reader into considerations of the overarching 'system' of a culture or into a reconstruction of its 'symbolic universe.'" The Jewish symbolic universe can be expressed in terms of concentric circles (cf. Milgrom 1991:725). God's presence is strongest at the core of the socio-religious system. Those who occupy this space must be particularly holy. The further one moved away from this core, the further one moved away from Holiness. Jerusalem was seen as the most holy city on earth, while Gentile cities were on the periphery and entirely unholy. The following graphic illustrates this:

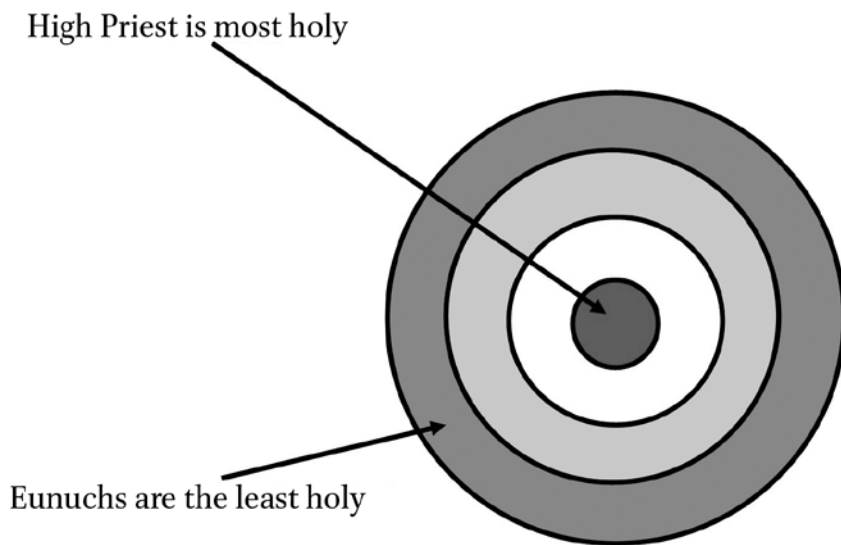


FIGURE 4 *The concentric symbolic universe of the Jews.*

In other words, Jesus enters the holy city Jerusalem during a holy time. One could argue that purity laws really intensified whenever holy time and holy place overlapped within the same context (like Sabbath obedience). If this is true, the current healing narrative is placed against a specific relief, one in which the symbolic universe of temple-oriented Jews would play a significant role. This makes the words and actions of Jesus so much more ‘shocking’ in that particular context. The author chose to position the narrative in a time before the fall of the temple. In view of the information he ever-so-subtly provides for the reader, it is clear that the author deliberately reconstructs this semantic world (cf. Sheep gate).²³

23 Louw & Nida (1989: *ad loc*) and others locate the bath of Bethesda on the north-eastern side of old Jerusalem. Schnelle (1998:102) agrees: “Der Ort dürfte identisch sein mit dem nördlich des Tempels gefundenen Doppelteich mit über 5000qm Oberfläche.” See Schnelle (1998:102) for a typographic exposition thereof. Archaeological excavations found it in 1888. Beasley Murray (1987:69–7) notes: “The opening phrase is ambiguous because our earliest MSS frequently do not employ the iota subscript, and so leave it uncertain whether a nominative or dative is intended, and there is on any interpretation a word missing. If we may assume ἐπὶ τῇ προβατικῇ to refer to ἡ πύλη ἢ προβατικὴ of Neh 3:1 we may translate, “There is in Jerusalem *by the sheepgate* a pool.” It is possible to view κολυμβήθρα as a dative and render “There is *by the sheep pool* (a place) and other authorities omit the preposition and read, “There is in Jerusalem a sheep pool.” Most

In 5:2–3, the narrator presents the reader with a broad window through which to view the upcoming scene. Jesus just arrived at Jerusalem's sheep gate, where a large number of sick people (ἀσθενούντων) lay (κατέκειτο) waiting²⁴ to receive healing at the immediate vicinity of the bath of Bethesda.²⁵ The scene is thus sketched against the background of various sick people's (ἀσθενούντων)²⁶ expectations to be rescued from the crisis²⁷ they found themselves in.²⁸

scholars however, view the first possibility as being more original. The other possibilities are ascribed to later attempts to clarify the text. Cf. Kysar (1986:75); Wengst (2000:182–183).

- 24 Some manuscripts add (KJV): "... waiting for the moving of the water. 5:4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had". See Jeremias (1966:5–8) and Barrett (1978:251–253) for a thorough discussion on the variant texts. A more detailed analysis is unnecessary at this juncture, since a determination of the exact reading will have no impact on the thesis of this book. The fact of the matter is that sick people waited there to be healed. The bath of Bethesda can thus be seen as a space of potential healing. Nonetheless, some individuals had been waiting for decades without success. The lame man of our text, who had been waiting for 38 years, is a case in point.
- 25 In those days, the bath of Bethesda was seen as a space where healing could be obtained. Healing powers were present there. The bath of Bethesda was located just outside the city wall, on the city's north-eastern side, near the Sheepgate. According to research, the bath was originally built to supply the temple with water (Craffert 1999:110). Apparently, it did not serve this function anymore at the time of Jesus, when it received a reputation for being a place that harbours healing powers. Naturally, this reputation had a historical origin. After Jerusalem became a Roman city in 135 BC, a "healing shrine" was erected on the same spot for Asclepius. Asclepius was a Greek God of healing. Initially, during the early Greek period, Apollo was the god of healing. Slowly but surely Asclepius became the god of healing. According to tradition, Asclepius was a famous physician in the fifth century before Christ, who later received divine status. Temples and healing shrines had been built all over the empire in his honour. One such temple is the Asclepeion in Athens (Craffert 1999:51).
- 26 Verb: Present, Participle, Active, Genitive, masculine plural of ἀσθενέω. *Lexicographical meaning possibilities*: Louw and Nida (1989:269) explains ἀσθενούντων under sub-domain 23.144 as follows: "to be sick and, as a result, in a state of weakness and incapacity—'to be sick, to be ill, to be disabled.' ἀσθενούντας νόσοις ποικίλαις ἡγάγον αὐτοὺς πρὸς αὐτόν... ἐθεράπευεν αὐτούς 'they brought those who were sick with various diseases to him... he healed them' Lk 4.40." In Luke 13:11, the word ἀσθενέω is linked to the work of an evil spirit, who weakened a certain woman, and, in Mark 2:5vv., it is linked to sin.
- 27 It seems as if John purposely tells stories (*semeia*) that represent examples of life situations characterised by crisis and disorientation in order to illustrate the radical life-giving might of Jesus. The next discussion will look at the reason why this narrative represents such an existential crisis situation.
- 28 The same word is used in Isaiah 53:4, where it says: "αὐτὸς τὰς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν ἔλαβεν καὶ τὰς νόσους ἐβάστασεν." "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows" (NIV).

4.2.1.2 Crisis Situation: Existential Situation of Death

Within the immediate context (John 5:3), John describes the nature of these ailments as including blindness (τυφλῶν); paralysis (χλωλῶν)²⁹ and deformity (ξηρῶν).³⁰ Contextually, the word ἀσθενούντων is often translated in Afrikaans Bibles as ‘gebreklike’ (‘disabled’) (cf. NAV)³¹ (cf. 5:7 ἀσθενῶν). Together with Bauer and others (1996: *ad loc*),³² as well as most English translations, such as the NIV, the KJV and the NRSV,³³ it is currently preferred to translate the word ἀσθενούντων with an inclusive term like ‘sick person(s)’, ‘sick man’, ‘invalid’ or ‘impotent man’, all of which include cases of paralysis or disability, but also include the ‘weak, powerless . . . sick person(s),’—those who suffered from other ailments that inhibit existential possibilities. However, it is important not to exclusively interpret any of these inclusive terms from a Western Bio-medical perspective. In other words, it is important not to view the sickness condition of the lame man simply as a biological ‘disease’, but rather, and in keeping with the broader understanding of the ancient cultural perspective, as an ‘illness’. The concept ‘illness’ presupposes certain socio-religious implications that are not always negotiated by commentaries.³⁴ Consequently, Neyrey (1991:285) notes: “Those with bodily defects such as the lame, the blind and the deaf are lacking wholeness according to Lev 21:16–20. Lacking bodily wholeness, they

29 Louw and Nida (1989: *ad loc*) explains it as follows under sub-domain 23.175 “pertaining to a disability that involves the imperfect function of the lower limbs—‘lame, one who is lame.’”

30 Louw and Nida (1989: *ad loc*) explains it as follows under sub-domain 23.173: “pertaining to a shrunken, withered, and hence immobile part of the body—‘withered, paralyzed.’ ἀνθρώπος χεῖρα ἔχων ξηράν ‘a man who had a hand that was shrunken and paralyzed’ Mt 12.10.”

31 NAV is the abbreviation for the *Nuwe Afrikaanse Vertaling* of 1983.

32 Arndt, Gingrich, Danker & Bauer (1996, c1979:115).

33 NIV: The New International Version; KJV: The King James Version; NRSV: The New Revised Standard Version.

34 Compare the absence of a comprehensive exposition on the socio-religious implications of illness, as understood during ancient times, in most commentaries on John, including those considered to be the best: Bultmann (1971); Barrett (1978:249v.); Ridderbos (1997:184v.); Carson (1991:240); Lindars (1992:205v.); Lincoln (2006); Brown (1971). Other scholars such as Witherington (1995) and Malina and Rohrbaugh (1992), by contrast, do succeed in negotiating the ancient Mediterranean understanding of the socio-religious implications of illness in their commentaries on John, but often still fail to integrate these analyses with the nature of the narrative as a semeia.

lack holiness. Such may not be priests nor may they bring offerings into the holy temple” (cf. also Milgrom 1991:1001).³⁵ Leviticus 21:16–20 reads as follows:³⁶

¹⁶Καὶ ἐλάλησεν κύριος πρὸς Μωυσήν λέγων ¹⁷Εἰπὸν Ααρων Ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ γένους σου εἰς τὰς γενεὰς ὑμῶν, τίνι ἐάν ᾧ ἐν αὐτῷ μῶμος, οὐ προσελεύσεται προσφέρειν τὰ δῶρα τοῦ θεοῦ αὐτοῦ. ¹⁸πᾶς ἄνθρωπος, ὃς ἂν ᾧ ἐν αὐτῷ μῶμος, οὐ προσελεύσεται, ἄνθρωπος χωλὸς ἢ τυφλὸς ἢ κολοβόρριον ἢ ὠτότμητος ¹⁹ἢ ἄνθρωπος, ὃς ἐστὶν ἐν αὐτῷ σύντριμμα χειρὸς ἢ σύντριμμα ποδός, ²⁰ἢ κυρτὸς ἢ ἔφθιλος ἢ πτίλος τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἢ ἄνθρωπος, ὃς ἂν ᾧ ἐν αὐτῷ ψώρα ἀγρία ἢ λιχήν, ἢ μόνορχις...

Against the background of the Jewish festival and a simultaneous intensification of the Jewish socio-religious cartography, the “status” of the unclean sick people changes drastically. Neyrey (1991:283) explains: “The human body constitutes one of the most important maps, for it is a microcosm of the larger social macrocosm.”³⁷ Within the Jewish symbolic universe, everything has its place. Whatever is out of place, is deemed unclean. Sick people and sickness in general do not belong in the realm of those who are healthy. This explains why lepers lived outside city walls and had to yell ‘Unclean’ whenever people came near (Pilch 2000:128). According to Neyrey (1991:82), this also applied in a certain sense to those who were disabled, blind, deaf and cripple.³⁸ Milgrom

35 Milgrom (1991:1001) disagrees and holds that this passage is not applicable to all Israel, but only to priests, or those who are intimately connected to the workings in and around the sanctuary.

36 Translation of Leviticus 21:16–21: ¹⁶“The LORD said to Moses, ¹⁷“Say to Aaron: ‘For the generations to come none of your descendants who have a defect may come near to offer the food of his God. ¹⁸No man who has any defect may come near: no man who is blind or lame, disfigured or deformed; ¹⁹no man with a crippled foot or hand, ²⁰or who is hunchbacked or dwarfed, or who has any eye defect, or who has festering or running sores or damaged testicles. ²¹No descendant of Aaron the priest who has any defect is to come near to present the offerings made to the LORD by fire. He has a defect; he must not come near to offer the food of his God.”

37 Neyrey (1991:283) says: “We are invited, then, to consider a map of the body which replicates the map of society.” This obviously refers to the concentric circles that move from less holy to more holy. The holiest point on the “map” is in the centre of the concentric system and the least holy point is on the periphery.

38 In this context, Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:111) also say: “These people without social standing (we could see them as the ‘poorest’) lived just outside the city walls or along the hedgerows of adjacent fields.”

(1991:1001) confirms this line of argumentation in his reference to the research results of Douglas:³⁹

The opposite of 'dirt out of place' is, of course, 'order', which in the Bible would correspond to the sphere of the holy. This accounts for Douglas' definition of the holy as 'wholeness and completeness' (ibid.:51), and she correctly points to the biblical injunctions that priests and sacrificial animals must be 'unblemished'. That 'wholeness' (Hebrew *tamîm*) is a significant ingredient of 'holiness' cannot be gainsaid. Indeed, it is precisely for this reason that the Qumran sectaries ban blemished persons from residing in the Temple city (11 QT 45:12–14).

MILGROM 1991:1001

Be that as it may, I tend to agree with Milgrom (1991:1001), who argues elsewhere that there was an essential difference between those with skin diseases, like leprosy, and those who suffered from some kind of physical disability. The main difference lay in the fact that those with skin diseases could contaminate others, which is why they were often marginalised intentionally (cf. Mark 1:40–45). However, a relevant question is whether or not the blind and disabled really were marginalised socially. The current narrative does suggest marginalisation, but the story about the blind man in John 9 seems to

39 However, Milgrom disagrees with Douglas on one important point. Over and against the preconceptions of most contemporary social scientists (cf. Douglas ([1966]; Neyrey [1991]; Pilch [2000]; Malina [1995]; McVann [1991]) Milgrom (1991) maintains that *ancient Jews did not socio-religiously marginalise individuals with physical impairments like paralysis and blindness*. Milgrom (1991:1001) argues that a clear distinction must be made between the following two categories: 'Holy' and 'Common' versus 'Unclean' and 'Clean'. Milgrom refers to Leviticus 21:17–20 and postulates: "A blemished animal or priest is not impure but common (hol). As for the prohibition against the blemished in the sanctuary, it only applies to priests officiating in the sanctuary and to animals offered on the altar. By contrast, any blemished Israelite—priest and lay person alike—may enter the sacred precincts and offer his sacrifices" (1991:1001). According to Milgrom, only those people or objects that displayed signs of so-called "*death-impurities*", were seen as being unclean (Milgrom 1991:1002). He views the following cases, among others, as "death impurities": Dead objects and the places that came into contact with these objects, semen, blood, skin diseases and open wounds etc. Any object that reminded Jews of the sphere of death were viewed as unclean. Milgrom argues that the blind and lame were not associated with "death-impurities", and could, therefore, not be classified as unclean. According to him, cripples would not have been thought of as unclean, but as "common".

suggest the exact opposite, seeing as the man's parents are intricately involved in the dynamics of the story (cf. 9:18–23).

In my opinion, the category of *death* connects these different cases of illness (e.g. leprosy and disability or blindness): Holiness and purity is connected to wholeness and God's order. Individuals with physical brokenness of whatever kind were not seen as 'whole' people and their very existence contradicted God's perfect order. That which is not whole, is therefore unclean. Impurity, in turn, was associated with sin and the sphere of death (cf. Neyrey 1991:285; Milgrom 1991:1002, 1003; Feldman 1977:35–37; Füglistner 1977; Kornfeld 1965; Paschen 1970:63; Von Rad 1962:1.272).⁴⁰ Singer and others (1902:248) agree with this and state: "The Talmud compares the blind, the leper, the childless, and the pauper to the dead (Ned. 64b) . . ." In the current passage, it is important to note that, at a certain moment in historical time,⁴¹ Jewish thought made a clear connection between certain states of illness (like blindness and begging) and the category of death.

Interpreting illnesses like blindness and paralysis in terms of the category of death was not only a feature of *Jewish* thought. Salier (2004:100) argues that such an interpretation of paralysis was also a prominent feature among other ethnic groups: "A paralysed man or even a lame man would have been seen as in some sense under the grip of death." Salier (2004:100) then quotes Aretaeus (*Sign. Diut.* 1.7.2), who mentions that Hippocrates saw no difference between the limb of a dead person and the paralysed limb of a living person (See also Bolt 1997:95–97). Instone-Brewer (2004:264) quotes Rabbinical writings (cf. m.Ter.1.6 probably after 70 CE—cf. m.Ter.1.1) in support of his argument that those who were mute, drunk, naked, blind and sexually impure were not allowed to sacrifice. The reason given for prohibiting blind persons from sacrificing was that they were not able to choose the best offering for God

40 For a discussion on the connection between illness and sin, see the chapter about the healing of the nobleman's son above.

41 This sentence is purposely structured in this way to leave room for the possibility that Jewish thought did not necessarily always make a connection between this illness and the category of death. As such, it is acknowledged that Israel's historical, cultural and socio-religious thought changed, adapted and altered with the passage of time. Think, for example, of the concept of God's omnipresence and the adaptation of conceptions about the devil after the Babylonian Exile. The current concern, however, is how to view the healing acts of Jesus. This concern underscores the importance of researching Jewish thoughts about illnesses like paralysis and blindness that are contemporaneous with Jesus. Furthermore, this concern is not only applicable to Jewish thoughts of the time, but also to Greco-Roman thoughts, particularly since John's audience were probably not made up of Jews, as was argued in chapter one of the book.

(cf. M.Ter.2.6). The same argument would undoubtedly have been made against paralysed persons, who wouldn't have been able to either choose the best offering for God or physically bring the offering to the altar.

It is interesting to note that, within the context of the present narrative, the author deliberately paints a picture against which the healing act must be understood. In this picture, the lame man is positioned between the ἀσθενούντων, τυφλῶν, χωλῶν and ξηρῶν (cf. also Mt 15:30; 21:14; Lk 14:21 where τυφλῶν and χωλῶν are used together). Why does the author do this? What ancient Mediterranean connotation is he seeking to evoke?⁴² From the perspective of Jewish Writings, the Messianic connotation would indeed have been recalled, since the Messiah was expected, among other things, to heal *these* kinds of ailments. (cf. Is 35:5–6). The latter possibly points to the negative connotation attached to such ailments. The very same Messiah who was expected to liberate people, was also expected to heal people and restore their brokenness—in a nutshell, he was expected to recreate existential possibilities. This means that John's interpretation of the healings as *σημεῖα* played a vital role in illustrating who Jesus is and how he creates life and realises restoration. Isaiah 35:5–6, for example, reads:⁴³

⁵τότε ἀνοιχθήσονται ὀφθαλμοὶ τυφλῶν, καὶ ὦτα κωφῶν ἀκούσονται. ⁶ τότε ἀλείψεται ὡς ἔλαφος ὁ χωλός, καὶ τρανὴ ἔσται γλῶσσα μογιλάλων, ὅτι ἐρράγη ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ὕδωρ καὶ φάραγξ ἐν γῇ διψώσῃ . . .

It is also interesting to read what other Jewish texts, specifically the Qumran texts, have to say about the subject. Naturally, one should be aware of the fact that the Qumran texts are not necessarily representative of the exact way in which temple-oriented Jews or John's readers thought. Nonetheless, it does at least provide some kind of indication of how certain groups from a certain time-period thought about this matter. It is clear from the Qumran texts that the blind were, on a religious level, thought of as inferior and were prohibited

42 According to Salier (2004:99), this scene and its grouping of ill people resemble typical 'healing sanctuaries' of the ancient world, and it would have recalled certain connotations to the reader's mind. Examples (according to Salier: [99–101] can be found in Aristophanes, *Plut.* 653–80; Strabo, *Geog.* 14.1.44. See also Pausanias, *Descr.* 2.27.2; 1032.12; Aristophanes, *Plut.* 410, 653–680; *Vesp.* 122; Plautus, *Curc.* 1.1.61; 2.1.18–21). In reference to the latter, see Salier (2004:101).

43 Isaiah 35:5–6 can be translated as such (NIV): ⁵Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. ⁶Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

from entering the temple, *the* symbol of God's divine presence. Blindness and paralysis are often referred to in the same contexts, as if they were on the same categorical level. Salier (2004:99) thus notices: "Χωλός designates the lame and crippled of the hand and, outside of John, the plural form is almost always found with τυφλός..." (cf. Mt 15:30;⁴⁴ 21:14;⁴⁵ Lk 14:21⁴⁶). If we are correct in this regard, Qumran texts dealing with blindness might also (indirectly) be an indication of how paralysis was perceived: 11Q19 XLIII–XLV under *Col. xlv* (=11Q20 xi–xii) deals with purity, purification and access to the temple. The latter text's immediate context relates blindness directly to socio-religious impurity and contamination:

But they shall not enter my temple with their soiled impurity and defile it. (11). *Blank*. And a man who lies with his wife and has an ejaculation, for three days shall not enter the whole city of (12) the temple in which I shall cause my name to dwell. *Blank*. No blind person (13) shall enter in *all their days*, and they shall not defile the city in whose midst I dwell (14) because I, YHWH, dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever and always.

MARTÍNEZ AND TIGSCHELAAR 2000A:1263 [ITALICS MINE]

In all cases of impurity and contamination, individuals are able to purify themselves and appear in the presence of God. The only exception is in the case of blindness. In other words, blindness was perceived as a socio-religious state of being from which liberation was an impossibility. These concepts are not alien to the Old Testament. Not only does 2 Samuel 5:8 assign both cripples and the blind to the same social group, but they are also explicitly represented as a socio-religiously marginalised group, who are restricted from accessing the temple:⁴⁷

44 Mt 15:30: καὶ προσήλθον αὐτῷ ὄχλοι πολλοὶ ἔχοντες μεθ' ἑαυτῶν χωλούς, τυφλούς, κυλλούς, κωφούς, καὶ ἑτέρους πολλούς καὶ ἔρριψαν αὐτοὺς παρὰ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐθεράπευσεν αὐτούς.

45 Mt 21:14: καὶ προσήλθον αὐτῷ τυφλοὶ καὶ χωλοὶ ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, καὶ ἐθεράπευσεν αὐτούς.

46 Lk 14:21: καὶ παραγενόμενος ὁ δοῦλος ἀπήγγειλεν τῷ κυρίῳ αὐτοῦ ταῦτα. τότε ὀργισθεὶς ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης εἶπεν τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ· ἔξελθε ταχέως εἰς τὰς πλατείας καὶ ῥύμας τῆς πόλεως καὶ τοὺς πτωχοὺς καὶ ἀναπεῖρους καὶ τυφλοὺς καὶ χωλοὺς εἰσάγαγε ὧδε.

47 2 Sm 5:8 can be translated as follows (NIV): ⁴⁸On that day, David said, "Anyone who conquers the Jebusites will have to use the water shaft to reach those 'lame and blind' who are David's enemies." That is why they say, "The 'blind and lame' will not enter the palace." Naturally, this text cannot be read uncritically. Questions must be raised as to whether the marginalisation of the blind and lame happened always and under all conditions, as to who the author or redactor of this passage was, as to the historical period during which the

text came into existence and as to the literary context of the passage. McCarter (1984:139) points out that the book Chronicles does not contain this saying, but fail to develop the socio-religious implications of this omission: "As we have seen, however, it leaves the succeeding reference to the lame and the blind meaningless." They primarily understand this saying in military, and not exclusivist socio-religious, terms. Consequently, they place this passage in the first emphatic position and understand it as being in contrast with the preceding passage. They then paraphrase the passage as such: "Whoever strikes down a Jebusite must deal a fatal blow, for otherwise the city will be filled with mutilated men who we have wounded but not slain, and I find such men intolerable." The saying about the exclusion of these persons from the presence of the Lord (temple) should then, according to them, be read against the background of Dt 23:1–2, according to which no mutilated individual may enter the presence of the Lord. Anderson (2002: *ad loc*), in turn, argues that the temple didn't yet exist in David's time and holds that this text was a later addition. He doesn't develop the socio-religious implications of this statement. Anderson (2002: *ad loc*) notes: "Further difficulties are created by v. 8b and its connection with v. 8a. We regard the latter part of the verse as a later addition, giving an etiological explanation of the proverb or saying, 'The blind and the lame shall not enter the house' (cf. Gn 22:14; 1 Sm 19:24)." This explanation is not found in the Chronicler's version of events, and it seems rather forced even if "house" in this context is not the Temple (cf. also Mic 3:12) but David's palace. It is just possible that beggars (i.e., the blind and the lame) were forbidden to enter the Temple (cf. Acts 3:1–10); at least, we are aware that such disabled people were disqualified from priestly duties (Lev 21:18). However, the Temple was not in existence in David's time, and therefore the aetiology appears to be somewhat artificial (see Stoebe, *ZDPV* 73 [1957] 91); on the other hand, David was later regarded as the founder of many cultic practices and regulations (cf. 1 Chr 22–28)."

See also Josephus (*Ant.* 7.61), who thinks that this text can also mean that the Jebusites were so powerful that even their blind and lame could keep David out of the city: "Now the Jebusites, who were the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and were by extraction Canaanites, shut their gates, and placed the blind, and the lame, and all their maimed persons, upon the wall, in way of derision of the king; and said, that the very lame themselves would hinder his entrance into it." Josephus doesn't say much more about this passage and doesn't make much of its socio-religious dimensions. Goslinga (1962:96) argues that this text doesn't seem to be an instruction of law and that it shouldn't be linked to Leviticus 21:16 at all: "De tekst biedt geen enkele grond om verband te leggen tussen Davids woord en het heiligdom." See also Stoebe (1994:165), who argues: "Nun wäre die Deutung: Entfernung von aller Blinden und Lahmen überhaupt aus dem Lande, zu spitzfindig, um glaubhaft zu sein. Dann aber liegt es nahe, die Blinden und Lahmen, die erst einmal entfernt werden sollen, unter den Leuten Davids zu suchen und solche in ihnen zu sehen, die nicht in der Lage sind, Möglichkeiten zu erkennen, noch weniger, sie dann auszunutzen." I agree with Stoebe that the intention of the text is not to instruct a physical removal of the blind and lame. However, I do indeed believe that the saying in 2 Samuel 5:8 has to do with the categorical socio-religious marginalisation of the lame and blind insofar as they are not allowed to enter the temple. They were not necessarily marginalised on a social level within the group, but perhaps only on a socio-religious or cultic level. The question still

⁸ καὶ εἶπεν Δαυιδ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ Πᾶς τύπτων Ιεβουσαῖον ἀπτέσθω ἐν παραξίφιδι καὶ τοὺς χωλοὺς καὶ τοὺς τυφλοὺς καὶ τοὺς μισοῦντας τὴν ψυχὴν Δαυιδ, διὰ τοῦτο ἐροῦσιν Τυφλοὶ καὶ χωλοὶ οὐκ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς οἶκον κυρίου.

Pilch (2000:128) informs us that, in a socio-religious context, people with ailments like blindness (and paralysis) were oftentimes seen as peripheral figures, who had to beg to survive (cf. Acts 3:1–10). Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:111) agree with Pilch and add: “Such beggars were among the socially expendables, the unclean ‘throwaway’ people who frequented every pre-industrial city.” In my opinion, socio-scientific scholars deal far too simplistically with the subject when they argue that cripples and the blind were always categorically marginalised. I believe that a more nuanced approach is in order. It is clear from those ancient texts discussed above that, on a *categorically religious or cultic level*, sick persons, like the blind and the paralysed, found themselves in an inferior and sometimes even marginalised position. The question remains, however, whether this was also true on a social level within groups or families. Various New Testament texts seem to suggest that this was not the case. Acts 3:1–10, for instance, tells the story of a lame man healed by Peter and John. Every day *his people* would place him at the entrance to the temple(gate) so that he could beg from temple goers (καὶ τις ἀνὴρ χωλὸς ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ ὑπάρχων ἐβαστάζετο, ὃν ἐτίθουν καθ’ ἡμέραν πρὸς τὴν θύραν τοῦ ἱεροῦ τὴν λεγομένην Ὀρραῖαν τοῦ αἰτεῖν ἔλεημοσύνην παρὰ τῶν εἰσπορευομένων εἰς τὸ ἱερόν). It is clear that there were people who helped this man on a daily basis and that some or other group looked after his wellbeing (cf. John 9 and the parents of the blind man). In terms of ailments like paralysis or blindness, it is therefore possible to speak of categoric religious or cultic marginalisation, but not necessarily of social marginalisation. Since faith is a social-constructive entity, one can only speak of socio-religious marginalisation, but only if it is understood that this didn’t necessarily include social marginalisation. This is also my understanding in the current book. All the information gathered thus far now enables us to return to John’s narrative about the lame man.

John 5 describes the nature of the lame man’s ailment as such that he had, by that time, already endured it for 38 years (ἦν δὲ τις ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖ τριάκοντα [καὶ] ὀκτὼ ἔτη ἔχων ἐν τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ αὐτοῦ). Pilch (2000:128) is on the mark when he argues, in his commentary that in this passage: “The sick person in this story is completely incapable of maintaining even a minimally honourable social

remains whether this was true for all time periods in Israel’s history and, particularly, whether this was the case at the time of Jesus. Most consulted commentaries make very little of this question.

position. From a Mediterranean point of view, he was poor, since by definition being poor in this culture means being unable to maintain one's social standing." The latter explains the man's lack of social honour in the eyes of others. The text itself expresses this point (4:7): ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω ἵνα ὅταν ταραχθῇ τὸ ὕδωρ βάλῃ με εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν· ἐν ᾧ δὲ ἔρχομαι ἐγώ, ἄλλος πρὸ ἐμοῦ καταβαίνει. Malina and others (1995: *ad loc*) are indeed correct when they postulate that it was essential in the Mediterranean group culture of the time to belong to a group, and that the value of the individual was acknowledged by the group. Thus, the lame man was in some sense an individual who had to function in relative isolation and, as a result, experienced a tremendous loss of qualitative life potentialities. Referring to the lame man in this passage, Pilch (2000:129) says: "He is desperately in need of healing, of restored meaning to life."⁴⁸ It can thus be argued (convincingly) that this healing narrative is painted against the backdrop of an existential situation indicative of socio-religious disorientation, crisis, death and the loss of life possibilities. Henceforth, this man not only experienced marginalisation on a categorical, socio-religious level, but also on a social level. What is more, on various symbolic levels, this man's life testifies to a 'dead(ly)' state of existence: 1) On a *socio-religious* level, whether interpreted in terms of the ancient Jewish or Greek way of thinking, his ailment is categorically related to death (as argued above). 2) On a *social* level, his lack of friends within a group-oriented society renders him socially dead. His social state of being is equitable to actually being (socially) dead. 3) In *John's* mind, the man is also spiritually dead, since he doesn't know the Messiah (cf. Jn 5:24). Such multi-dimensional states of 'death' can, within the framework of the restorative hermeneutic of representation, be understood as the existential situation of crisis and disorientation. Ultimately, it is against this dramatic background of multi-dimensional 'death', crisis and disorientation that it becomes possible to illustrate how the Son, as a divine agent of transformation, can offer life to a socio-religious fringe figure.

48 Human (2007:16) notes: "'Dood' was nie net 'n leweloze liggaam nie. Dit was eweneens die afwesigheid van lewe of God. Siekte, die bedreiging van vyande of die gevolge van verkeerde dade was doodsbelewensse (Ps 44:23; en veral Ps 88). Om weg van Jerusalem of die tempel te wees, was ervaring van die dood (Ps 137); daarom was Israel se terugkeer uit ballingskap herlewering uit die dood (Eseg. 37)." [Translation: Death was not just a dead body. It was also the absence of life and God. Disease, the threat of enemies or the consequences of wrongdoing was also associated with 'death' experiences (Ps 44:23; especially Ps 88). To be away from Jerusalem or the temple was also experienced as a form of 'death' (Ps 137), so that Israel's return from exile was interpreted as a revival from death (Ezk 37).]

4.2.2 *John 5:5–9*⁴⁹

4.2.2.1 Jesus Heals the Man and Gives Him a New Life with Possibilities

The narrator of John 5:5–9 moves from the general to the specific. The man who had been sick for 38 years⁵⁰ is now brought into direct focus.⁵¹ Jesus, who, up to this point, had been associated with the new temple (2:19–22), the Messiah and the Christ (4:42), and who illustrated that he, like the God of creation (cf. 1:1–4), is able to give life simply by speaking the word (cf. also 1:1–4), initiates the interaction with the man in crisis (Ridderbos 1997:185). Köstenberger (2004:178) notes: “The upper class and those wishing to be ritually pure would have avoided this area.” Within this narrative context, therefore, the author provides a general idea of the background that not only places Jesus in the vicinity of one sick person, but in the presence of multiple sick people, thereby expressing the universality of the case in question. Salier (2004:96) agrees with this line of thought: “While there are hints as to his actual condition through the passage, the general setting and general nature of his affliction lend an air of universality to the account. This healing is a paradigmatic one in that Jesus is shown to be dealing with an illness in a place that is full of illnesses.”

At this point in the narrative, the author allows the audience a quick glance at the inner perspective of Jesus (Salier 2004:96). Jesus realised (γινώσκω)⁵² that this man had been dealing with his current crisis situation for many years (5:6).⁵³ In response, Jesus then asked the man if he wanted (Θέλεις)⁵⁴ to

49 Presently, there is no need to discuss the degree to which this text parallels similar texts in the other gospels. See Brown (1971:208–209) for such a discussion.

50 It is unlikely, according to Barrett (1978:253), that the number 38 has any symbolic meaning. In contrast to the average life expectancy of about 75 years in the Modern Western world, it was between 30 and 45 years in the Mediterranean world of the first-century (Craffert 1999:8). Studies and research of tombstones of the Greco-Roman world indicate that, on average, people died at around the age of 20 years. In contrast to modern times, women tended to have shorter life expectancies than men (Craffert 1999:9). The mortality rate of children was very high (30%). Research shows that one out of every three children failed to reach the age of 18. One out of every five people reached the age of 50 and only 3% of all people reached the age of 60.

51 Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:111) says: “The sick person described here is totally unable to maintain even a minimally honorable social position.”

52 Verb, Aorist, Participle, Active, Nominative, masculine singular of γινώσκω. Brown (1971:207) thinks that Jesus’ supernatural knowledge of people is a theme in John (cf. 2:25). See also Witherington (1995:137). See Carson (1991:243) for a similar position.

53 Verb: Present, Participle, Middle, Accusative, masculine, singular of κατὰκειμαι.

54 Verb: Present, Indicative, Active, 2nd person singular of θέλω.

become (γενέσθαι)⁵⁵ healthy (ὑγιής).⁵⁶ The latter choice of words indicate that Jesus didn't simply ask the socio-religious fringe figure with his brokenness (impurity/lack of social honour) if he wanted to be repaired biologically, but actually asked him if he wanted to become 'whole'. Put differently, within this context, Jesus' question also implied a need for socio-religious repair—repair of his humanity and the qualitative life possibilities he had lost (or never had, to begin with). After 38 years, the man's condition and weakness had already been an essential part of his identity and self-concept. As such, Jesus' question probably didn't seem to the man like a viable possibility. We have already referred to the fact that ancients did not distinguish between a person's morbidity and his humanity. This explains why there wasn't such a thing as an honourable leper. The sickness condition determined an individual's identity. In this context, identity was a social-constructivist affair that was worked out within that symbolic universe. Malina and Neyrey (1991:25; 67) argue that maintaining one's honour was a lifelong endeavour. A permanent illness of this kind resulted in a permanent state of socio-religious shame.

The man's answer to Jesus' question was that there was no one to put him in the bath when the water was stirred (5:7—ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ ὁ ἀσθενὼν· κύριε, ἀνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω ἵνα ὅταν παραχθῇ τὸ ὕδωρ βάλῃ με εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν· ἐν ᾧ δὲ ἔρχομαι ἐγώ, ἄλλος πρὸ ἐμοῦ καταβαίνει).⁵⁷ Each time he tried to reach the water, someone (always) beat him to it. In a group-oriented society, the man finds himself without friends. The author thus depicts the man as a fringe figure, marginalised in the true sense of the word—someone without qualitative life possibilities. Ridderbos (1997:184) points out that the lame man didn't really know or realise who Jesus was (cf. 5:13) and, apart from the healing water at Bethesda, couldn't foresee coming into contact with any other source of healing. Naturally, then, the man didn't realise that Jesus was the source of life. Brown (1971:20) is of the opinion that the man also suffered from a "chronic inability to seize opportunity, a trait reflected again in his oblique response to Jesus' offer of a cure." Carson (1991:243) holds a more sympathetic opinion of the man, proposing instead that he had an intense desire to be healed, which is indicated by his "persistent presence at the pool".⁵⁸ It is clear that the man

55 Verb: Aorist Infinitive Middle of γίνομαι.

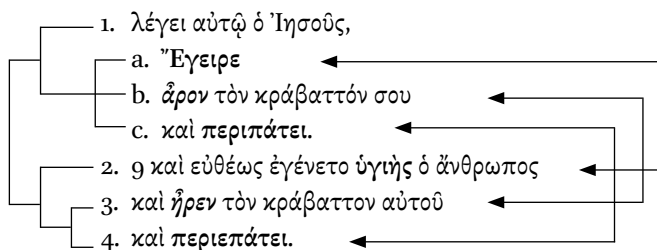
56 Louw and Nida (1989: *ad loc*) explains ὑγιής under domain 72.14 as such: pertaining to being accurate, as well as useful and beneficial—'right, accurate, sound.'

57 It was believed that an angel of the Lord brought the water in motion. The individual that manages to come into contact with water first, receives healing. See Carson (1991:243) and Barrett (1978:254).

58 Cf. Bruce (2005:39–56).

wasn't part of a social group that could look after his interests. In essence, he was a marginal figure and a loner within a group-oriented society. Jesus often reached out to such individuals (cf. Jn 4:1vv.; Jn 9:1vv.). Jesus tends to meet people precisely when and where they fail to fit into the inner circle of the reigning socio-religious system. In relation to the diagram above (figure 11), which uses concentric circles to visually illustrate the reigning system of holiness and purity, Jesus repeatedly meets, touches and heals people occupying a marginalised position on the socio-religious cartography of the day. Ridderbos (1997:186) succeeds in providing a very striking summary of the narrative's dynamics: "What we have here is a snapshot of a man doomed for years to powerlessness on account of an incurable illness, looking in vain for a miracle to happen, who had no one (or no one left?) to assist him in this predicament. To such a person Jesus comes with his question, a question full of power and promise: 'Do you want to be healed?'"

Out of nowhere, Jesus gives the command: Get up (Ἔγειρε),⁵⁹ pick up (ἄρον) your (sleeping) mat (κράβαττόν σου),⁶⁰ and walk (περιπάτει).⁶¹ The passage proclaims that the man was immediately healed (εὐθέως ἐγένετο),⁶² that he picked up his mat, and that he walked. The success of the healing act is emphasised by the repetition of ὑγίης (5:6, 9, 11, 14, 15). John 5:8 betrays the following structure:



59 Verb: Present, Imperative, Active, 2nd person singular. In John 2:19, the same word is used, also in reference to restoration. Louw and Nida (1989: *ad loc*) explains it under sub-domain 13.65 ἐγείρω as follows: "to change to a previous good state—'to restore, to cause again to be, restoration.' And under 23.140 as 23.140 ἐγείρω: to restore a person to health and vigor; 'to restore to health, to heal'.

60 Carson (1991:243) informs us that these mats were usually made of straw.

61 See the agreement with Mark 2:11, where Jesus gives the same command.

62 Adjective with Verb: Aorist Indicative Middle 3rd person singular of γίνομαι. Brown (1971) understands this immediate healing to be a typical theme of the gospels.

The words of Jesus

ἐγείρε—Get up!

ἄρον—Pick up

Περιπάτει—walk

The fulfilment of Jesus' words

εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὑγιής—immediately healed

ἦρεν—he picked up

Περιπάτει—he walked

This structure clearly reveals that the words of Jesus created life. In my opinion, as will be discussed later on, this calls to mind the act of creation, where God's words immediately brought certain realities into existence. Jesus is already linked to the act of creation in the prologue (cf. Jn 1:1–4): 'Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. 2 οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. 3 πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν 4 ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

John frequently uses the word ἐγείρω in literary contexts where life is created from deadly existential situations (cf. 2:19; 2:22; 5:8; 5:21; 12:1, 9, 17; 21:14). In this sense, ἐγείρω is a key term in this passage (Beasley-Murray 1987:73), seeing as it is a sign of the life-yielding power that is the focal point of the whole gospel (3:16; 20:30–31). When the structure of chapter 5 was analysed, we argued that the healing narrative can not be read in isolation from the rest of the discourse developed in John 5. In light of the textual unity between the healing narrative and the subsequent discourse, an argument can be made that the text itself interprets (the meaning of) the healing act as a *semeion*. The healing narrative puts the ability of Jesus to create life on display, and the subsequent discourse defines this life as 'eternal life' or 'resurrection life' (cf. 5:29). John 5:21 reads as follows: ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ἐγείρει τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ ζωοποιεῖ, οὕτως καὶ ὁ υἱὸς οὕς θέλει ζωοποιεῖ. The concept of life is put over and against the concept of death. It is argued that the Father is the one who creates life out of deadly (τοὺς νεκροὺς) situations or states of existence, but that he transferred to his Son this ability to create life. Thus, there is a clear movement from death to life, from crisis and disorientation, to reorientation and new existential potentialities within the family of God (1:12). Similarly, 5:24 alludes to the same categorical line of interpretation: Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ὁ τὸν λόγον μου ἀκούων καὶ πιστεύων τῷ πέμψαντί με ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον καὶ εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται, ἀλλὰ μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν. It is clear that the healing act is utilised as a *semeion* to illustrate the truth behind 5:21 and 5:24. In order, ultimately, to illustrate these truths, the healing narrative has to, on an analogical level, be connected, either categorically or thematically, to the basic framework of the spiritual truth that needs to be communicated. Now, the question is: Where does this analogical connection lie? The answer is that the themes of life and death, on the one hand, and the theme of Jesus as the life-creating agent of transformation and existential possibilities, on the other, are connected. In a holistic worldview

(like that of the ancient Mediterraneans), the symbolic value of the healing act as *semeion* lies precisely in the fact that, if Jesus can be shown to have the ability to grant physical life, it ultimately becomes a symbol for the fact that he can also grant spiritual life—which is obviously the purpose of John’s healing miracles (cf. 20:30–31). Whatever happens on the physical level also happens on the spiritual level. The latter observation strengthens the argument that the current healing narrative typically presents an existential situation of death, in order to illustrate Jesus’ ability to create life, through which the narrative wants to free people from spiritual death by granting them life (cf. 5:24).

Just as with the healing of the nobleman’s son (cf. 4:50), the interaction of transformation (healing miracle) happens after Jesus utters *life-creating words*. In dealing with the healing of the nobleman’s son, we argued that the ‘word-healing’ of Jesus reminds one of the Creator God of Genesis 1, who created life by simply uttering a word. Once again, Jesus illustrates here that he has the ability to create life by means of his life-creating words. The ability to create life is something that was ascribed solely to God (cf. Gn 2:7; Dt 32:39; Job 33:4; See Salier 2004:99) as is the healing of the paralysed, something that the Messiah would eventually do (cf. Is 35:5). In the story of the nobleman’s son, the man and his son became faithful and received eschatological life. The question is whether the lame man of this story will also become faithful and receive life within the sphere of God’s family? In contrast to the previous healing narrative, it does not seem as if faith played any role here.⁶³

4.2.2.2 Jesus as the One who Grants Qualitative Life

The interaction between Jesus and the lame man can indeed be viewed as an interaction of transformation. Salier’s (2004:102) portrayal is striking:

The man is restored to health and life as he is raised from a state of living death. Jesus is again portrayed as life-giver. In a world riddled by death and disease this could not help but be an action that indicated divine power. The identity and mission of Jesus are again revealed to all in a sign recorded in the Fourth Gospel.

SALIER 2004:102

In 5:21, Jesus declares: “ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ἐγείρει τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ ζῶοποιεῖ, οὕτως καὶ ὁ υἱὸς οὗς θέλει ζῶοποιεῖ. Like the Father raises (ἐγείρει) the dead and “makes them alive” (ζῶοποιεῖ), so the Son also so “makes alive” whomever he

63 Barrett (1978) argues that the lame man of Mark 2:3, 5 had four men with him that brought him to Jesus on his bed. Faith played an important role here. His use of the word Κύριε in his answer to Jesus simply referred to its general application “sir”.

wishes. Köstenberger (2004:187) rightly points out that the Old Testament, as well as Second Temple literature, unambiguously ascribes the ability to grant life exclusively to God (cf. Gn 2:7; Dt 32:39; Job 33:4). In other words, the healing narratives discussed thus far relates to the life Jesus grants and his acts of healing inextricably with one another. The fact that Jesus has the ability to “make alive” means that he could only have received this ability from God. This, in turn, means both that Jesus is indeed the sent Son of God, who can bestow life, and that John’s healings are signs of God’s qualitative life and the existential potentialities that result from it, signs that become visible in people’s lives (5:21).

Unlike Barrett (1978:254), it is preferred not to make use of the word “cure”. It was argued elsewhere in the book that the concept “curing of a disease” betrays a Western bio-medical context and understanding. The concept “healing of an illness” is therefore preferred. The concept “healing of an illness” ensures that the healing act is purposefully understood in terms of the necessary socio-religious dimension. The lame man got back not only the functional and biological use of his limbs.⁶⁴ The man’s status (initially)⁶⁵ changed from a sick, unclean and marginalised individual to someone who is now whole. With that he received the latent potential, as part of the ancient Jewish-Mediterranean socio-religious context, to be repaired again (Ridderbos 1997:186).⁶⁶ On a narrative level, there is even mention of a change in space. The man leaves behind that specific space typified by sickness, death and marginalisation. After 38 years of physical and emotional immobility and captivity (cf. *καταχέιμενον* in 5:6), the man is now, perhaps for the first time, able to move around freely (cf. *περιπάτει* in 5:8,9).⁶⁷ Jesus, therefore, enabled the man to become free from

64 Barrett (1978:256) says: “Just as the thirty eight years prove the gravity of the disease, so the carrying of the bed and the walking prove the completeness of the cure.”

65 The question, however, is whether the representatives of the socio-religious system of the time will “reconstruct” or acknowledge the man’s new status. See, for instance, John 9:34.

66 Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:114) says: “To be healed is to be restored to one’s social network.”

67 Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:112) informs us of the interesting fact that the Sabbath represented a weekly celebration of the yearly Passover: “The Sabbath was a weekly replication of the annual Passover that celebrated Israel’s status as free persons, now devoted to the service of their liberator God.” That is why Israelites were expected to be free of any work or obligation on the Sabbath, free to serve God. By carrying his mat, the man violates the Sabbath. This is ironic, since Jesus freed him from a life of bondage and captivity. He is no longer a slave of illness, depleting him of any and all existential possibilities, but a free man with life possibilities.

his powerlessness and to stand up to a new life and new existential possibilities (See Beasley-Murray 1987:74; Ridderbos 1997:186).⁶⁸ The transformation of the man's immobility to movability naturally carried with it certain social implications in that he could henceforth live out his socio-religious life. This passage thus reveals the fact that Jesus' healing acts had certain social implications as well, and that they enabled people to transform the loss of life's potentialities into second chances. As such, the healing acts of Jesus gave people second chances in and for life. This reminds one of Zephaniah 3:19.⁶⁹

19 ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ποιῶ ἐν σοὶ ἕνεκεν σοῦ ἐν τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, λέγει κύριος, καὶ σώσω τὴν ἐκπεπισμένην καὶ τὴν ἀπωσμένην, εἰσδέξομαι καὶ θήσομαι αὐτοὺς εἰς καύχημα καὶ ὄνομαστοὺς ἐν πάσῃ τῇ γῇ.

The act of healing is, in this way, an example of a restorative hermeneutic of re-presentation. From a position of death, disorientation and crisis, Jesus restores the brokenness of the situation into one of reorientation and a re-presentation of reality.

However, the healings in John are *σημεῖα* and are told with a particular purpose in mind. Just like the multiplication of bread (cf. Jn 6), as a *semeion*, has very little to do with the way in which Jesus fed hungry people, the healings primarily have very little to do with how Jesus restores marginalised people on a socio-religious level. John simply utilises the acts of healing, which are examples of socio-religious marginalisation, crisis and disorientation with the resultant loss of existential potentialities, to illustrate that Jesus has the ability to grant spiritual life potentialities. The miracle sign serves to highlight a greater truth (20:30–31), namely, that Jesus, like the Father, possesses the power to bestow life (5:21), which must mostly be understood as eternal life. In John 3, we already saw that believers are born again and, as such, are spiritually born into a new family, thereby sharing in the existential potentialities of that family (cf. 1:12–13). This does not mean, however, that the import of the identified socio-religious implications should be overlooked. For if these socio-religious

68 John 5:1–9 is embedded within the context of 5:1–47. In 5:19–30, Jesus is depicted as the One that gives Life like his Father. Jesus claims that his Father taught him this. Two important perspectives will be looked at later. The *connection between healing and life* and what is meant when it is claimed that the *Father taught the Son*.

69 Zephaniah 3:19 can be translated as such (KJV): “¹⁹ Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame.”

life potentialities did not realise, then the healing itself would not have qualified as an effective *semeion*. The more dramatic the socio-religious reparation, the more dramatic is the witness it offers of Jesus' ability to create life and to make possible the impossible. In this way it strengthens the argument and purpose John has in mind (20:30–31).

4.2.2.3 Will this New Life be Recognised by the Socio-Religious Leaders?

Pilch (2000) points out that when one deals with a cultural perspective on "healing", one must keep in mind that the healing process involves the entire socio-religious system.⁷⁰ In the context of a group-oriented society, healing is not just a biological event. In the first place, rather, it is a socio-religious event. The fact that the individual is biologically healed does not necessarily mean that he or she will enjoy socio-religious or holistic healing. Hence, the question becomes whether or not the socio-religious representatives will acknowledge and accept this new life and its resultant potentialities.⁷¹

According to Brown (1971:208), the prohibition against carrying objects on the Sabbath from one place to another is one of the last of 39 prohibited activities in the *Mishnah* (*Shabbath* 7:2). With this act, the man explicitly transgresses the law. An argument has already been made that expectations of obedience to the law intensified during holy times. It is clear from the literary context that the narrative indeed takes place during holy time. The story not only takes place on the Sabbath, but it also takes place in the holy city of Jerusalem during a spiritually festive time. According to Neyrey (1991:271vv.), social maps and borders are more intensely managed during these times. It can be expected that the "temple police" would have been actively on duty. At this point in the narrative, the ancient Jewish reader was probably left with mixed feelings. On the one hand, they would have experienced excitement because of the healing, but, on the other hand, they would have experienced anxiety and tension because Jesus, as everyone would have been aware, "had led this man into sin". Jesus here acts in direct violation of the law. According to Jewish interpretation of the law, Jesus violates at least the following two "maps":

70 The phrase "curing of a disease" expresses the bio-medical Western context and understanding of the curative process. In contrast to the Cultural model, betterment takes place if and when control has been gained over the person's biological pathology. It is not a top priority, under the Western bio-medical model, to enquire into the socio-religious implications of betterment.

71 This is a very relevant question. In John 9:34, the representatives of the socio-religious system bans the man, which means that socio-religious healing did not take place.

- *Map of Time*: Jesus (and the man) desecrates the Sabbath in the midst of the holy time of the festival.⁷²
- *Map of Place*: Jesus (and the man) perform(s) an unholy deed within the confines of the holy city Jerusalem, in close proximity to the holy temple.

4.2.3 *An Exegetical Study of John 5:9b–13*

4.2.3.1 The Jews Question the Man

As argued in the structural analysis, 5:1–18 can be divided into two parts: A healing narrative (vv. 1–9a) and a conflict narrative (vv. 9b–18). Chapter 5:9–18 can be further subdivided into 5:9–13, which deals with the Jews' questioning of the healed man; 5:14–15 and 5:16–18, which deals with the Jews' conspiracy to kill Jesus. Salier (2004:98) argues that the healing narrative was intentionally painted against the backdrop of the Sabbath as a lead in to the Jewish challenge to Jesus in the next pericope. It is for this reason in particular that the healing narrative should be read in conjunction with the section that follows it (See Brown 1966:215–217). The tension between Jesus and the Jews pick up further momentum in this passage. The subject matter revolves around the violation of the Sabbath and the identity of Jesus.

Joh 5:10–13

Ἦν δὲ σάββατον ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἔλεγον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τῷ τεθεραπευμένῳ, Σάββατόν ἐστιν, καὶ οὐκ ἔξεστίν σοι ἄραι τὸν κράβαττόν σου. ¹¹ ὁ δὲ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς, Ὁ ποιήσας με ὑγιῆ ἐκεῖνός μοι εἶπεν, Ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει. ¹² ἠρώτησαν αὐτόν, Τίς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ εἰπὼν σοι, Ἄρον καὶ περιπάτει; ¹³ ὁ δὲ ἰαθεὶς οὐκ ᾔδει τίς ἐστιν, ὁ γὰρ Ἰησοῦς ἐξένευσεν ὄχλου ὄντος ἐν τῷ τόπῳ.⁷³

The narrative moves to a new scenario in John 5:10. When they question the man, the Jews are immediately introduced as antagonists. The man being questioned is portrayed as someone who has been healed (τεθεραπευμένῳ). With this, the narrator informs his audience that the healing act of Jesus

⁷² See also Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:112).

⁷³ Translation (KJV): “¹⁰ The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, it is the Sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed. ¹¹ He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up *thy* bed, and walk. ¹² Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up *thy* bed, and walk? ¹³ And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in *that* place.”

(protagonist) was indeed successful, and that even the antagonists (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι)⁷⁴ bear witness to that success. The Jews (antagonists) accuse the man of violating the law of the Sabbath by carrying his mat (Ex 20:8–11;⁷⁵ Jr 17:19–27⁷⁶).⁷⁷ At this point in the narrative, the reader realises that the healing was not a goal in itself. The healing narrative was constructed to lead in another subject, the motif of the Sabbath and the resulting conflict between Jesus and the Jews, and, ultimately, the revelation of Jesus' identity (Brown 1971:210).⁷⁸ According to the *Mishnah* (*Shabbath* 7:2), an object may not be carried from one place to another on the Sabbath (Barrett 1978:254). That the Jews would immediately have noticed the man's transgression is understandable.

Irony plays a great role in this passage: For the reader, it is ironic that the Jews fail to comprehend the magnitude of what had transpired when the man was healed and restored. They clearly have no knowledge thereof, and fail to exhibit the necessary insight.⁷⁹ The Jews' insensitive response distances the reader from them (Salier 2004:97). Furthermore, it is ironic that the healed man

74 The term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι repeatedly appears in the gospel in contexts where they are presented as opponents of Jesus. See Newman and Nida (1980:148).

75 Exodus 10:8–11 (NIV): ⁸ Then Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. "Go, worship the LORD your God," he said. "But just who will be going?" ⁹ Moses answered, "We will go with our young and old, with our sons and daughters, and with our flocks and herds, because we are to celebrate a festival to the LORD." ¹⁰ Pharaoh said, "The LORD be with you—if I let you go, along with your women and children! Clearly you are bent on evil. ¹¹ No! Have only the men go; and worship the LORD, since that's what you have been asking for." Then Moses and Aaron were driven out of Pharaoh's presence.

76 Jeremiah 17:19–22 (NIV): ¹⁹ This is what the LORD said to me: "Go and stand at the gate of the people, through which the kings of Judah go in and out; stand also at all the other gates of Jerusalem. ²⁰ Say to them, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and all people of Judah and everyone living in Jerusalem who come through these gates. ²¹ This is what the LORD says: Be careful not to carry a load on the Sabbath day or bring it through the gates of Jerusalem. ²² Do not bring a load out of your houses or do any work on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your forefathers.

77 Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:112) informs us of the interesting fact that the Sabbath represented a weekly celebration of the yearly Passover: "The Sabbath was a weekly replication of the annual Passover that celebrated Israel's status as free persons, now devoted to the service of their liberator God." That is why Israelites were expected to be free of any work or obligation on the Sabbath, free to serve God. By carrying his mat, the man violates the Sabbath. This is ironic, since Jesus freed him from a life of bondage and captivity. He is no longer a slave of illness, depleting him of any and all existential possibilities, but a free man with life possibilities.

78 Culpepper (1993:205) argues that the conflict between Jesus and the Jews was not as prominent in the first four chapters. In chapter five, however, the conflict is established, and in the remainder of the gospel, it is intensified.

79 See Beasley-Murray (1987:74).

doesn't know the identity of his healer (Witherington 1995:138). Knowledge and faith play important roles in John. Those who don't know Jesus are the very same people who don't believe and who don't know the Father (cf. 1:26; 7:28–29; 8:19, 55; 10:4–5, 14; 14:7; 15:21; 16:3; 17:3). They are those who, in reality, occupy a spiritual state of existential death (5:24). John 17:3 directly links knowledge of the identity of Jesus Christ and of the God who sent him with eternal life (soteriology): ³αὕτη δέ ἐστιν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωὴ ἵνα γινώσκωσιν σὲ τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεὸν καὶ ὃν ἀπέστειλας Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν. Barrett (1978:255) compares this healing narrative to the one in John 9 and argues that faith did not play such a vital role in the former.

4.2.4 *An Exegetical Study of John 5:14–15*

The Greek construction μετὰ ταῦτα indicates a disruption in the narrative flow. A change of scenery also indicates this. The scene of the encounter between Jesus and the healed man is specifically sketched in the temple.

Joh 5:14–15

14 μετὰ ταῦτα εὕρισκει αὐτὸν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, "Ἴδε ὑγιὲς γέγονας, μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε, ἵνα μὴ χειρόν σοί τι γένηται. 15 ἀπῆλθεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἀνήγγειλεν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὸν ὑγιῆ.⁸⁰

A while later (μετὰ ταῦτα) Jesus found (εὕρισκει) this man in the temple (ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ).^{81, 82} *The question now is why the narrator felt it necessary to position both Jesus and the man at the scene of the temple?*⁸³ The story of the heal-

80 Translation (NIV): ¹⁴ Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." ¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

81 Carson (1991:245) holds that it was somewhere close to the immediate temple border, south of the Bethesda ponds.

82 Ridderbos (1997:188) says: "But though Jesus had gone his way, he was not finished talking with the healed man."

83 Not one commentary could be found that satisfactorily answered this question. See, however, Freedman (1992: *ad loc*) in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, under 'purity and impurity':

"The *ḥattā't* Sacrifice. The *ḥattā't* (purification offering) purifies various sancta (altars and sanctuary rooms) from impurity (Exod 29:36; Lev 8:15; cf. Ezek 43:20–23; 45:18). The pollution it removes derives from either the more serious permitted impurities (abnormal sexual discharges, Lev 12:6–8; 15:14–15, 29–30; *šāra'at* in persons, 14:19, 31; corpse contamination of a priest in Ezekiel, 44:27), or from sinful situations (the mismanagement of permitted impurities, inadvertent corpse contamination of a Nazirite, and inadver-

ing of the leper in Mark 1:40–45 could offer a possible explanation. After healing the leper, Jesus expressly instructed him not to tell a soul, but to go and show himself to the priest and then to bring the sacrifices prescribed by Moses. These acts would then prove to others that he had been made pure (Morris 1995:272; Laney 1992:112). The same process could perhaps be unfolding here. For 38 years, the lame man was unable to bring sacrifices to the temple. As a result, he could never be declared pure. The man now gets the opportunity to be acknowledged as pure by the socio-religious system. Köstenberger (2004:182) does not believe that the man was there to sacrifice, but rather that he is just aimlessly strolling in the temple's vicinity (cf. also Carson 1991:245; Brown 1966:208).

Jesus then says to the man: “See, you are well again” (Ἴδε ὑγίης γέγονας). The perfect tense (ὑγίης γέγονας) points to the man's, “continual state of well-being” (Köstenberger 2004:182). Then Jesus says something interesting: “Stop sinning (μὴκέτι ἁμάρτανε),⁸⁴ so that something (much)⁸⁵ worse doesn't happen to you⁸⁶ (ἵνα μὴ χεῖρόν σοί τι γένηται).”⁸⁷

tent and intentional sins; on these see below). The sacrifice is also used in dedicating the burnt offering altar (see below). These impure conditions or sins pollute the sancta from a distance; impure persons or transgressors need not be in the sanctuary precincts to cause the pollution. Delaying Purification. Delay of purification from permitted impurities exacerbates the effect of an impurity. This is considered sinful and is consequently penalised. Those who contract pollution from impure objects, animal carcasses, or from human impurities including a corpse, and find out about it or remember it, after the period prescribed for purification has passed, need to bring a *hattā't* sacrifice, presumably in addition to their required ablutions (Lev 5:2–3; cf. vv. 1–13). The requirement for a *hattā't* shows the sanctuary has been polluted. Corpse-contaminated persons who do not purify, pollute the sanctuary and will suffer *kārēt* “cutting-off” (premature death or extinction of progeny; Num 19:13, 20; see Wold 1978). The verses in Numbers 19 are talking of conscious avoidance of purification while those in Leviticus 5 are talking of an inadvertent lapse. Hence, attitude determines the type of penalty assessed. See also Lev 17:15–16; cf. 15:31.”

84 See Thomas (1995:3–20).

85 Louw and Nida (1989: *ad loc*) explains it under sub-domain 88.107 as follows: χεῖρων, ον: comparative of κακός—‘worse, very bad.’

86 For a detailed overview of sin, as understood in the Old Testament, see Kok (2008:147–156) in a detailed excursus discussing inter alia the work of Cover in Freedman about “sin” (1992).

87 This statement of Jesus can be interpreted in at least one of two ways. Ridderbos (1997:189) thinks that μὴκέτι ἁμάρτανε appears in the *Present imperfect active* with the resulting meaning of “Do not continue what you are doing, in this case, sinning.” This presumes that the man is busy sinning and that he must stop it. In terms of John's theology of sin, this understanding means that the man occupies a sinful state of existence because of his

According to Carson (1991:245), Jesus combines the healing explicitly to a need for moral reformation.⁸⁸ Many scholars believe that Jesus makes no

lack of faith (cf. 5:18–29). In my view, ἀμάρτανε appears in the *Present Imperative Active*. This would mean that the phrase “*stop sinning*” refers to the sin mentioned in the text itself, namely that of carrying the mat and thereby violating the Sabbath. The implication of the latter is that Jesus must here be understood as appealing to the man to function optimally within the socio-religious structures of his time. Jesus came to give life (5:21) and is not limited by Sabbatical law, since he is the fulfilment of the law (Ridderbos 1997:261). It is still interesting to note that Jesus himself violates the Sabbath by touching a leper when he heals him (Mk 1:40–45). However, after healing him, Jesus orders the leper not to tell anyone about it, but to go and show himself to the priest immediately and bring the sacrifices prescribed by Moses, so that these acts can convince others that he has been healed or restored. In other words, Jesus tells the leper that he must function effectively within the boundaries of the socio-religious structure. Instead of running straight to other people and continuing with a normal life, he must first go to the centre of the socio-religious system. *In my view, this simply assures the holistic healing of the illness.* If those who had been healed should move against the socio-religious system and thereby make themselves guilty of sin in the eyes of the representatives of that system, the latter would not view them as clean or whole and ban them from the inner circle (cf. Joh 9:34). If an individual is banned because of his faith in Jesus, he would have sinned in the eyes of the Jews, but not in the eyes of Jesus, which means that he would be taken in by the family or group of Jesus. But if the man should betray Jesus, he would, according to Jesus, remain in a sinful state of existence (5:24), but according to the Jews, who are representatives of the socio-religious system, he would not have sinned. *From the narrator's point of view, sin is defined in the gospel from a Christological perspective.* In the present context, Jesus diverges from the Jewish interpretation of Sabbatical law, but he possibly still encourages the man to keep the traditional laws, in order to ensure survival within the system. It doesn't seem likely that the man became part of the Jesus-group. The man must therefore survive within the socio-religious system of the Jews. How does one survive within such a system? By adhering to their standards of purity and what it means not to sin. If he should continue sinning and disobeying the law, like carrying his mat, he could be physically punished or even put to death. Jesus had nothing against the law in and of itself. He had an issue, rather, with the external focus that suffocated the internalisation of the law and, in the process, marginalised people. After all, he did restore the man's lost life possibilities and his brokenness. The man is no longer caught up in the stronghold of illness and clinical socio-religious laws that impeded his existential possibilities. Now he can move around in the socio-religious world with its associated possibilities for life. However, he is in danger of losing his freedom, should he disobey the Jewish laws and be on the receiving end of even worse limitations. But on the other hand, the words of Jesus could also be interpreted as a warning not to commit the cardinal sin the author has in mind, in other words, to live as a disciple of Jesus from now on.

88 Carson (1991:246–247) maintains that the Present Imperative usually denotes urgency. According to him the text can be interpreted as “‘stop sinning’ (thereby assuming the

connection between sin and illness in 5:14–15, especially when compared to texts like 9:1–3⁸⁹ and 11:4 (See Köstenberger 2004:182; Witherington 1995:139).⁹⁰ Bultmann (1971:188) maintains that 5:14 contradicts 9:2–3. Ridderbos (1997:188–189), however, thinks that healing and forgiveness here moves to the foreground, while sin and illness disappears into the background (cf. Matt 9:2): “Jesus’ works of healing do not occur outside of the circle of forgiveness of sin. Rather, they are the outflow of it, proof that in Jesus God reaches out to humankind in its totality, which means, above all, in its estrangement from God” (Ridderbos 1997:188). In and through Jesus, God reaches out to a hostile world, makes it whole and, as a result, heals the broken relationship between himself and the world. In ordering the man not to sin anymore, Jesus communicates to him, firstly, that he has been touched, secondly, that he must realise who it was that made him whole, and thirdly, that he must start living within that relationship. However, by not knowing who Jesus really is, the man brings judgment upon himself (See Barrett 1978:255). He is an unbeliever who fails to realise the true identity of Jesus. Unbelievers occupy a deadly state of existence. If he *now* forgets or betrays Jesus, the man will remain faithless and receive a far greater punishment when his faithlessness is judged (5:22). Köstenberger (2004:182) then comes to the conclusion that Jesus’ prohibition against sinning should probably be seen as a warning to prevent something worse from happening to him, like God’s eternal judgment (cf. also Barrett 1978:255; Beasley-Murray 1987:74; Schnackenburg 1990:2.98). Sin in John, according to Van der Watt (2000a:76), generally refers not to individual sinful deeds, but to a sinful state of existence occupied by humanity. Indeed, there are a small number of references to individual deeds, like 5:14 (μηκέτι ἀμαρτάνει) and 9:2,3 (ῥαββί, τίς ἥμαρτεν), (8:11), but these are the exception. *Individual deeds are rather seen as resulting from the position a person occupies in relation to God.* Evil deeds

healed man had been sinning all along) rather than ‘don’t sin [again]’ (thereby assuming he had committed this particular sin since the fateful rebellion that had earned him the illness).” He rightly says that this could perhaps be the correct interpretation, but also mentions that there are too many grammatical exceptions to justify a direct clinical application of this ‘rule’.

- 89 John 9:1–3: “As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³ “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life”.
- 90 For example, Brown (1971:208) says: “Elsewhere Jesus does not accept the thesis that because a man was sick or suffering, it was a sign that he committed sin (John ix 3; Luke xiii 1–5). Nevertheless, on a more general scale he does indicate a connection between sin and suffering.” See also Carson (1991:245–246) and Barrett (1971:255).

indicate that someone loves ‘darkness’ more than ‘light’ (3:19–20). In other words, when Jesus tells the man to sin no longer, he is actually telling him that he is still trapped in a deadly state of existence. The man is neither opposed to Jesus, like the Jews, nor on Jesus’ side, like the nobleman and his family. In some sense, the man is neutral. John’s dualistic frame of mind does not allow for any grey areas. Those who don’t believe that Jesus is the Son of God are trapped in a deadly state of existence. Unlike the story of the nobleman, the current text does not seem to suggest that this man showed the correct faith. On the contrary, in his naivety and spiritual blindness, he only succeeded in giving Jesus up to the Jews.⁹¹

Jesus didn’t just offer the man new life possibilities, but gave it to him without merit. The man’s lack of faith and spiritual blindness caused him to stay trapped in a sinful state of existence, which, in turn, caused him to continue sinning.⁹² According to John’s theology, those who do not believe in Jesus or his Father and those who do not know the true identity of Jesus, are all spiritually dead and have already been judged (cf. 5:24). *In other words, although the man regained his functional, socio-religious existence, he could potentially have lost his eschatological existence.* The man reports to the Jews and tells them that it was Jesus who healed him and who, by implication, gave him the command that led to the sin of betraying the Sabbatical law.

With this, the character disappears from the scene (Ridderbos 1997:189). All that remains is the tense situation between Jesus and the Jews.

4.2.5 *An Exegetical Study of John 5:16–30*

For John, the miracles of healing are σημεῖα, or signs that are in the service of John’s purpose with the gospel. This purpose is that people would believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that they, by believing, would receive eternal life (cf. 20:30–31).

The following passage is important, since it reveals how the meaning and interpretation of σημεῖα takes place. In this passage, Jesus is portrayed as the One who grants life. More importantly for our current purposes, the connection between healing and life is developed here. The mechanics of this connection will eventually play an important role in the argument of the last exegetical chapter on the resurrection as an act of healing. For this reason, it is absolutely necessary for us to analyse the remaining discourses in John 5.

91 See Barrett (1978:255).

92 Bultmann (1971:243) warns against moving outside the narrative’s goal: “The reader is clearly not required to pass judgment on the behaviour of the healed man; all interest in him ceases after v. 15.”

4.2.5.1 The Jewish Conspiracy to Kill Jesus

The phrase καὶ διὰ τοῦτο is an indication that we have to do with a new passage. Since this phrase, together with the repetition of ὅτι ταῦτα ἐποίει ἐν σαββάτῳ. and ὅτι οὐ μόνον ἔλυεν τὸ σάββατον, also appears in 5:18, it creates an *inclusio* between 5:16 and 5:18.

Group E: The Jewish conspiracy to kill Jesus

1. 16 καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐδίωκον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τὸν Ἰησοῦν,
 - a. ὅτι ταῦτα ἐποίει ἐν σαββάτῳ.
 2. 17 ὁ δὲ [Ἰησοῦς] ἀπεκρίνατο αὐτοῖς,
 - a. Ὁ πατήρ μου ἕως ἄρτι ἐργάζεται καὶ ἐγὼ ἐργάζομαι·
 - b. καὶ ἐγὼ ἐργάζομαι·
 3. 18 διὰ τοῦτο οὖν μᾶλλον ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀποκτεῖναι,
 - a. ὅτι οὐ μόνον ἔλυεν τὸ σάββατον,
 - b. ἀλλὰ καὶ πατέρα ἴδιον ἔλεγεν τὸν θεόν
 - c. Ἰσον ἑαυτὸν ποιῶν τῷ θεῷ
-

The foregoing structure clearly betrays this pericope's core theme, which is the violation of the Sabbath and the resultant conspiracy to kill Jesus. This scene is linked to the foregoing pericope in that the events of the latter led directly to the events of the former.

Joh 5:16–18

16 καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐδίωκον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τὸν Ἰησοῦν, ὅτι ταῦτα ἐποίει ἐν σαββάτῳ. 17 ὁ δὲ [Ἰησοῦς] ἀπεκρίνατο αὐτοῖς, Ὁ πατήρ μου ἕως ἄρτι ἐργάζεται καὶ ἐγὼ ἐργάζομαι· 18 διὰ τοῦτο οὖν μᾶλλον ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀποκτεῖναι, ὅτι οὐ μόνον ἔλυεν τὸ σάββατον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πατέρα ἴδιον ἔλεγεν τὸν θεὸν Ἰσον ἑαυτὸν ποιῶν τῷ θεῷ.⁹³

93 Translation (NIV): ¹⁶So because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. ¹⁷ Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." ¹⁸ For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God."

According to Friberg et al. (2000:118),⁹⁴ the Jews pursued (ἐδίωκον)⁹⁵ Jesus to such an extent that it could easily have led to banishment.⁹⁶ The reason for such hostility is qualified: They usually reacted harshly towards those who violated the Sabbath, as we already discussed above.⁹⁷ Jesus immediately reacted (5:17) and defended⁹⁸ himself by saying: Ὁ πατήρ μου ἕως ἄρτι ἐργάζεται καὶ γὼ ἐργάζομαι.⁹⁹ Beasley-Murray (1987:74) reminds us that the Jews believed, in accordance with the creation story, that God rested on the seventh day (Gn 2:2–3; cf. *Gen. Rab.* 11.10; Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 13.12.11, frg. 5; [cf. Boring, Berger and Colpe 1995:267]).¹⁰⁰ Jesus, on the other hand, believes that his Jewish opponents do not correctly understand the nature of God's involvement, seeing that God is actively involved and busy, even on the Sabbath

94 Friberg, Friberg & Miller (2000:118).

95 Verb: Imperfect Indicative Active 3rd person plural of διώκω with the meaning: "To put to flight, to pursue, by impl. to persecute." Friberg et al. (2000:118) explains the word as follows: 'διώκω impf. ἐδίωκον; fut. διώξω; 1aor. ἐδίωξα; pf. pass. ptc. δεδιωγμένος; 1aor. pass. ἐδιώθη; (1) as making haste *press forward, hasten, run* (figuratively in PH 3.12); (2) of hostile pursuit *persecute* (JN 5.16); *drive out, expel* (MT 23.34); (3) figuratively, as being zealous; for a person *run after, pursue* (LU 17.23); as an earnest striving after something *pursue, follow after, seek after* (1T 6.11.)."

96 Hendriksen (1976:195) says: "So intense is the anger of the Jewish authorities when their attention is fixed upon Jesus that they determine in their hearts to persecute him even unto death."

97 Barrett (1978:256) maintains that the word ἔλθεν in 5:18 appears in the imperfect to imply that Jesus habitually transgressed against the Sabbath or that he was on the lookout for ways in which to destroy it. The imperfect signifies the general nature of the transgressions. Freedman (1992: *ad loc*) says: "In the examples from Num 19:20 and Lev 15:16–31, the sanctuary is said to be 'defiled' by the impure/guilty Israelite because ritual impurity from unatoned guilt is viewed as an aerial contaminant, mystically settling down over the community to pollute it, and most heinously, it comes into contact with the residence and property of God (Frymer-Kensky, *WLSGF*, 399–414)."

98 The word ἀπεκρίνατο appears in the Aorist indicative middle form. Carson (1991:247) refers to Abbott, who indicates that this grammatical form had legal undertones, seeing as it often occurs in legal documents. See also Witherington (1995:135–136). He discusses the ancient Jewish judicial process and how it differed from current practices. He discusses how the prosecutor and the accused would often change roles during proceedings. More than once, Jesus reversed these roles. In these cases, the Jews would then become the accused under God's judgment.

99 According to Ridderbos (1997:191) 5:17 contains Jesus' fundamental answer, which then becomes the basis for the rest of the discourse from 5:19 onward.

100 See Barrett (1978:256) and Carson (1991:247).

(Malina and Rohrbaugh 1998:112–113; Carson 1991:247–248; Barrett 1978:256; Strack and Billerbeck [1924–1961]:461).¹⁰¹ Haenchen notes:

Gottes Tätigkeit als physische Schöpfung hat zwar am Sabbat ein Ende gefunden, nicht aber seine moralische Tätigkeit, die sich an Guten und Bösen vollzeit... Nach rabbinischer Exegese verbietet das Sabbatgebot nicht, dass man am Sabbat etwas in seinem Haus herumträgt. Gottes Gehört aber ist die obere und die untere Welt. Darum darf er darin schaffen, ohne mit dem Sabbat in Konflikt zu geraten.

HAENCHEN 1980:273

Jesus links his acts of healing and his labour (ἐργάζομαι) on the Sabbath with the giving of life—something that only God can do (5:21; cf. Gn 2:7; Dt 32:39; Job 33:4).¹⁰² With this, Jesus associated himself with God and, as far as the Jews were concerned, even equated himself with God.¹⁰³ He also calls God his own Father (Ὁ πατήρ μου), a manner of speaking that didn't exist within the liturgical practices of Israel (Beasley-Murray 1987:75; Barrett 1978:256; Köstenberger 2004:185), with the exception of several Old Testament texts, such as Jr 3:4, 19;¹⁰⁴ Ps 89:27¹⁰⁵ (Köstenberger 2004:185). According to Bultmann (1971:244), the Jews associated equality to God with independence from God. However, Jesus always admitted his dependence upon God (5:19). Rather, Jesus communicated something of the particularly unique relationship between him and the Father.¹⁰⁶ Because Jesus acquired honour for himself, the Jews weren't able to view it as an expression of a unique relationship. Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:113) rightly points out: "It is important to recognize that

101 Witherington (1995:135) says: "Jesus believed that he with his ministry was bringing out the true intent and meaning of the sabbatical rest, namely, relieving people from their burdens both mental and physical; and thus healing on the Sabbath was carrying out part of the original intent of the Sabbath laws." From a Johannine perspective, Jesus is seen as the one who provides relief to humanity—the source of rest and life. He truly is, then, the fulfilment of the Sabbath. After all, Jesus did say that man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath for man.

102 Beasley-Murray (1987:47) says: "The signs just narrated indicate that he brings to men no mere *anticipation* of the saving sovereignty of God but its *reality*—life from the dead; and he declares judgment on rejecters of the word of God which the Last Judgment will confirm. Such is the theme of vv. 19–30..."

103 Barrett (1978:256) says: "The καὶ ὡς of v. 17 places Jesus on a level with God."

104 Jer 3:4 (NIV): "4Have you not just called to me: 'My Father...'"

105 Ps 89:26 (NIV): "26He will call out to me, 'You are my Father...'"

106 See Carson (1991:249).

honor derives from one's family, and thus kinship claims are always honor claims (genealogies are a good example). When Jesus claims kinship with God, he is claiming God's honor for himself."¹⁰⁷ At this stage, the Jews' antagonism toward Jesus intensifies. Not only did Jesus violate the Sabbath, but according to them, he also equated himself to God, thereby making himself guilty of blasphemy—something that deserved the death penalty (Lincoln 2005:198).¹⁰⁸ According to Ridderbos (1997:191), 5:17 (Ὁ πατήρ μου ἔως ἄρτι ἐργάζεται καὶ ἐγὼ ἐργάζομαι—"My Father is still working, and I also am working" [NRSV]) contains Jesus' fundamental answer and reaction to the accusation of the Jews, which forms the basis of the whole discourse that commences at 5:19 (See Köstenberger 2004:184–185).

In what follows, an exegetical study of John 5:19–30 is undertaken. Culpepper (1993:205) agrees with Ridderbos (1997:191) and notes that Jesus' utterance in 5:17 becomes the lens through which the whole narrative must be read. He also sees this verse as the transition to the discourse that starts at 5:19. This discourse paints a picture of the unique relationship between the Father and the Son.¹⁰⁹ The act of healing is a σημεῖον and is put in perspective by the rest of the literary context. The latter reveals important and necessary insights for the argument of this thesis.

4.3 An Exegetical Study of John 5:19–30

4.3.1 *Jesus Gives Life Like God Gives Life*

John 5:19 and the preceding passages are inextricably linked. Among other reasons, this is clear from the connection between 5:17 and 5:19, both of which revolve around the relationship between Jesus and God (Köstenberger 2004:185).¹¹⁰ The discourse in 5:19–20a is crucial to the construction of the whole Gospel.¹¹¹ While the discourse in John 5:31–40 revolves

107 See 5:23: ἵνα πάντες τιμῶσι τὸν υἱὸν καθὼς τιμῶσι τὸν πατέρα. ὁ μὴ τιμῶν τὸν υἱὸν οὐ τιμᾷ τὸν πατέρα τὸν πέμψαντα αὐτόν.

108 See Hendriksen (1976:194) and Witherington (1995:134).

109 Culpepper (1993:205) notes that the Son does what he does because he is "duplicating" the works of his Father. The healing of the lame man must, therefore, be seen as something God would have done himself, "had he been on earth". As such, Culpepper indeed sees Jesus as the Word that became flesh, the incarnation of the Creator-God himself (John 1:14v.).

110 Barrett (1978:258) argues for seeing the themes of life and judgment as being two of the most prominent themes in the Gospel.

111 See Ridderbos (1997:191), as well as his introduction to the Gospel.

around the identity of Jesus, 5:41–47 revolves around the theme of faith and faithlessness.

4.3.2 *John 5:19–23*

In this section, Jesus intensifies the idea that was uttered in 5:17, namely that He works like the Father is also working now. The construction of words in 5:19, “Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν,” indicates intensification and links the following text with the previous.¹¹² Jesus makes an essentially important declaration in this passage. He says that he is ‘unable (οὐ δύναται) to do anything (or nothing: οὐδέν) out of himself (οὐ δύναται . . . ἄφ’ ἑαυτοῦ),¹¹³ except (ἐὰν μὴ) that which he sees (βλέπει)¹¹⁴ the Father do (τὸν πατέρα ποιοῦντα).¹¹⁵ Then Jesus qualifies this statement (5:19): ‘For whatever the Father does (ἃ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ποιεῖ), the Son does exactly the same (ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ)’. Gnllka (1985:41) comments: “Die Übereinstimmung von Vater und Sohn wurzelt in dessen Präexistenz.” Schnackenburg (1971:10) elaborates: “Die Einheit des Zusammenwirkens von Vater und Sohn ist so gross, dass der Sohn das, was der Vater tut, ‘gleichfalls’ tut. Gemeint ist nicht ein neben- oder nacheinander erfolgendes Wirken in gleicher oder ähnlicher Weise, sondern ein gleichzeitiges, miteinander verbundenes Tun.” In other words, Jesus says that he duplicates the works of God.¹¹⁶ When people look at the works of Jesus, they also see the works of God (See Beasley-Murray 1987:74–75; Morris 1995:277; Borchert 1996:236). However, Haenchen (1980:275) warns us that the concept “Der Sohn kann nichts von sich aus tun, wenn er nicht der Vater etwas tun sieht” should not be interpreted as a precise “Spiegelbild” according to which the Son, in every single moment, does exactly what the Father does and vice versa, since this would, according to him, impair the *vere homo* of Jesus.¹¹⁷

In my view, Köstenberger (2004:186) is correct when he explains this relationship between Father and Son as an image that portrays the dependence of the Son in his relationship to the Father. Jesus acts in obedience and dependence. Like a good Son who sees, learns and does certain things that he receives from

112 Hendriksen (1976:198) translates this introductory formula with: “I must solemnly assure you”.

113 Gnllka (1985:41) is correct when he remarks that the “Einheit des Wirkens von Vater und Sohn” is emphasised in this passage and that “Sein Wirken ist Sichtbarwerden des Wirkens des Vaters.”

114 Verb: Present Subjunctive Active.

115 Verb: Present Participle Active.

116 Hendriksen (1976:198) speaks of “flawless correspondence” and Schnackenburg (1971:130) of “gleichfalls.”

117 Keener (2003:648) speaks of analogy.

his Father—so the words and deeds of Jesus essentially represent that which was learnt from his relationship with his Father (See Morris 1995:277; Carson 1991:250). This puts Jesus in the ideal position to do the will of the Father and to reveal him to humanity (cf. Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο in 1:18).

Jesus then qualifies and intensifies this process further (5:20): Jesus says that these things can be attributed to (ὁ γὰρ) the fact that the Father loves the Son (πατὴρ φιλεῖ¹¹⁸ τὸν υἱόν) and shows (δείκνυσιν)¹¹⁹ him everything (πάντα) He does (ποιεῖ). Schnackenburg (1990:2.103) is therefore correct when he says that the phrase “...Jesus does the works of the Father who sent him...” implies that it was God who led Jesus to heal the lame man and give him new life potentialities. Here, Jesus says that he and the Father are enmeshed in an intimate relationship with one another (Van der Watt 2000b:272).¹²⁰ However, Jesus doesn’t stop there! The trajectory of intensification continues (5:20). Jesus claims that God will show him *even greater works* than these (μείζονα τούτων δείξει), which would cause the Jews to be astonished (θαυμάζητε) (Schnackenburg 1971:132–133). Naturally, this refers to the giving of life and the raising of people from the dead (Hendriksen 1976:199): In 5:21 (NIV), we read: ‘For just as the Father raises (ἐγείρει) the dead (τοὺς νεκρούς) and gives them life (ζωοποιεῖ), even so (οὕτως) the Son gives life (ζωοποιεῖ) to whom he is pleased to give it (θέλει)’. Giving life is one of the most notable assignments God gave Jesus (See Van der Watt 2000b:272),¹²¹ and also the typical signature of the Creator-God. Gnllka (1985:42) agrees: “Die Toten lebendig zu machen, ist nach biblischer Auffassung die Prärogative Gottes.” In this way, the healing narrative, as *σημεῖα*, is appropriated to the UDN level, as argued above. It is then also in this context that the narrative of the lame man acts as an exemplar of an existential situation of multi-dimensional death in order to illustrate

118 Verb: Present Indicative Active of φιλέω.

119 Verb: Present Indicative Active of δείκνυμι. Louw and Nida (1989: *ad loc*) explain it under sub-domain 28.47 as such: “δείκνυμι or δεικνύω; ὑποδείκνυμι: to make known the character or significance of something by visual, auditory, gestural, or linguistic means—‘to make known, to demonstrate, to show.’”

120 Louw and Nida (1989: *ad loc*) explains it under sub-domain 25.33 as such: “φιλέω; φιλία, ας f: to have love or affection for someone or something based on association—‘to love, to have affection for.’” This suggests a love that naturally flows forth from a close or intimate relationship.

121 Witherington (1995:142) says: “Part of what the Father has authorized and empowered the Son to do is to give life, to be able to raise the dead—a power early Jews believed was solely in the hands of God.” Also see his discussion on Jesus as agent sent by the Father (1995:140–142).

how Jesus gives life. The story thus prepares for the culminating act of healing (or *σημεῖα*) when Jesus himself rises from the dead. It is in this way that a relation is created between the present act of healing and the resurrection. John thus sketches a deadly reality or negative life situation devoid of “life” in order to illustrate Jesus’ ability to create life. By creating such a world of meaning, the author succeeds in accentuating the life-giving potentiality of the Son. Ultimately, the physical or material *semeion* (as an example of Jesus’ ability to create life, like the Creator-God) becomes a *semeion* that points to a deeper spiritual truth, namely that he has the ability to create and give spiritual life.

The reverse of giving life is judgment and death (5:22). That is why Jesus says in 5:22 (NIV): ‘Moreover, the Father judges no one (οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ κρίνει οὐδέναν), but has entrusted all judgment (τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν) to the Son (δέδωκεν τῷ υἱῷ)’. Ridderbos (1997:8) holds that the intimate relationship between Jesus and God has direct implications for the *power over life and judgment* as a consequence of this relationship. *The projection of this type of life goes beyond the socio-religious possibilities that Jesus gave to the lame man*.¹²² The healing narrative and the functional life that came out of it are simply pointers to a “greater” eschatological life offered by Jesus.¹²³

John 5:23 then says: ‘For this reason (ἵνα) all (πάντες) must honour (τιμῶσι)¹²⁴ the Son just as (καθὼς) they honour the Father (τιμῶσι τὸν πατέρα)’ (See Carson 1991:255; Köstenberger 2004:188; Morris 1995:279). ‘He who does not honour the Son (ὁ μὴ τιμῶν τὸν υἱόν), does not honour (οὐ τιμᾷ) the Father who sent him (πέμψαντα¹²⁵ αὐτόν)’ (Haenchen 1980:277–278). Jesus then strengthens his argument in 5:24 (ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν) and affirms that ‘those who hear (ἀκούων) his word (τὸν λόγον μου) and believe in him (πιστεύων) who sent

122 Carson (1991:359) says: “The signs attest who Jesus is precisely *because* they point beyond themselves, and even then they do not guarantee insight.” He refers to Painter, who argues that there are various symbolic elements within the ‘source’ (Haenchen’s ‘*semeia* source’) “[T]hat invite the thoughtful reader to look beyond the raw material.”

123 Beasley-Murray (1987:76) says: “This is to be seen in the “greater works” that will be shown to the Son, and that will cause the Jews to marvel. [N]aturally they will also point to the greater realities of the Kingdom of God, which however the Jews will not be able to perceive.”

124 Verb: Present, Subjunctive, active of τιμάω. Louw and Nida (1989: *ad loc*) Louw and Nida (1989: *ad loc*) explains it under sub-domain 87.8 as follows: “τιμάω; δοξάζω: to attribute high status to someone by honoring—‘to honor, to respect.’”

125 Verb: Aorist, Participle, Active of πέμπω. Louw and Nida (1989: *ad loc*) explains the word under sub-domain 15.66 as follows: πέμπω; ἀποστέλλω; ἀπολύω: to cause someone to depart for a particular purpose—‘to send.’

Jesus (τῷ πέμψαντί με) already has (ἔχει)¹²⁶ eternal life (ζωὴν αἰώνιον) and won't be judged (εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται).¹²⁷ Such people have already crossed over (μεταβέβηκεν)¹²⁸ from/out of death (ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου) to/in life (εἰς τὴν ζωὴν).¹²⁹ Those who believe also understand something of the identity and mission of Jesus. They understand that Jesus was sent by God to free humanity from an existential state of death by raising them (ἐγείρει) to an existential state of life (ζωὴν). Non-believers are in 'darkness' and death, while those who do believe tread in the light's spotlight as part of God's family.

The reverse of life is judgment and death. Van der Watt (2000a) explains that 5:24 provides a clue as to the 'metaphorical nature' of eternal life: The believer moves across from death to life (μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν—cf 5:24).¹³⁰ The key to this transition from death to life is *hearing* and *believing*. Those who hear and believe will start living spiritually and realise that they were actually spiritually dead before. It was simply not possible before to stand in a spiritual relationship with God. In this manner, the concept of 'life' is related to a relationship with God. In relational terms, 'faith' is the key to a 'new spiritual life' and its resultant existential possibilities. Van der Watt (2000a) is therefore right when he states:

Death is therefore a metaphorical description of a state of alienation from God. This explains the use of 'judgment' in 5:24 (καὶ εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται). God protects his own (e.g. 10:29), while those who do not belong

126 Newman and Nida (1980:158) note: "Throughout John's Gospel there is always a tension between present and future. The believer already experiences in some degree the reality of *eternal life* which he will fully experience only at the end of time, and the one who refuses to believe is presently under God's judgement—a judgement which will be fully manifest only at the end of time. This means that just as *eternal life* is a present reality, so eternal death is also a present reality." The subsequent verse expresses this tension clearly (NIV): "A time is coming and has now come . . ."

127 Barrett (1978:261) says that κρίσιν includes the eschatological judgment: "... κρίσις includes the future judgment, and also the judgment that was in process throughout the ministry of Jesus (and that of the Holy Spirit, 16.8,11)." Haenchen (1980:278) notes that: "Der Evangelist spricht ja, wie in V.25 deutlich wird, nicht nur von der irdischen Lebenszeit Jesu, sondern er hat die gesamte Jesusbotschaft vor und nach Ostern im Sinn."

128 Verb: Perfect, Indicative, Active of μεταβαίνω.

129 Barrett (1978:261) says: "The believer has already passed out of the world ruled by death and entered the realm of eternal life; that is, his future reward has been anticipated, and is consequently assured to him."

130 As far as the Old Testament is concerned, God is the only One who can bring life and healing. See Barrett (1978:260); Newman and Nida (1980:155); Brown (1971:218).

to him (are not in a relationship to him) are judged (12:47–48). This is also emphasized in 3:36. Those who do not believe will suffer the consequences of the wrath of God, apart from the fact that they will not see eternal life . . .

VAN DER WATT 2000A: *AD LOC*

4.4 The Problem of Humanity¹³¹

4.4.1 *Crisis: The World is Trapped in a Deadly Existence*

Just as the narrative of the lame man was an example of an existential situation characterised by crisis, disorientation and death, the entire world is also trapped in a spiritual existence characterised by death. Du Rand (1990:21) mentions that the *Johannine dualism* is a very noticeable trademark feature of the gospel. According to Du Rand, the Johannine dualism¹³² chiefly operates soteriologically and ethically within a cosmic framework. As such, Johannine reality entails at least two fundamental dimensions. On the one hand, there is the so-called world “from above,” and, on the other hand, the so-called world “from below” (Du Rand 1990:21). The world “from above” (cf. 1:51; 3:13, 31) is a heavenly, holy, eternal and spiritual dimension. The world “from below” is qualitatively inferior to the world “from above” (6:51, 58, 63; 4:13. See also 1:11; 6:38–40, 51; 17:6–10). There is an antithetical relationship between the world “from below” and the world “from above” (7:7). *The gospel’s basic point of departure is that the visible, temporary, earthly creation is in the hands of*

131 Research on this passage depends heavily on the results of Van der Watt (2000a:19–31). The passage under discussion touched on a few key elements in need of further discussion, such as: How the Father educates the Son (cf. Perkins 1988:657–662)? Why it is necessary for believers to cross over from death to life?; How is the latter related to the sending and mission of Jesus on earth?; How should one ultimately understand the relation between healing and (eternal) life? In short, one can say that this section of the book will *contemplate relation(s) between mission, instruction, healing and life*. The current argument draws heavily on Van der Watt’s (2000b:296–303) thought pattern regarding the mission motif. As such, he will not be referenced throughout.

132 Van der Watt (2000a) opts, rather, for the term contrast instead of dualism. He argues that dualism represents two units that compete against one another on more or less the same level. According to him, John’s theology doesn’t leave much room for competition on such a level playing field. After all, light demolishes darkness and truth is qualitatively superior to deceit. That is why he opts for the term contrast instead of dualism. I agree with Van der Watt that, within this context, contrast is a better concept. If and when the word dualism does occur, it essentially means the same as Van der Watt’s understanding of contrast.

the 'force of this world' and trapped in death (5:24; 1 Joh 3:14). Satan is viewed as the force of this visible world. He is like a father to his children, who acts like he does (8:44).¹³³ That is why they hate God and his children, whom they don't know. The question becomes how humanity can be freed from this deadly existence (5:24)?¹³⁴ Salvation and life can only come "from above", from the heavenly reality. Therefore, the source (itself) of this qualitative life must come to emancipate humanity from its deadly existence.

4.4.2 *Transformation Agent: God Gives (Sends) His Son as Transformation Agent*¹³⁵

According to John, God alone is able to bestow salvation or life (Van der Watt 2000a:18). It is precisely for this reason that the mission¹³⁶ of the Son is the gospel's central Christological motive.¹³⁷ It is also one of the central structural pillars upon which the Gospel is built.¹³⁸ Van der Watt (2000a:30, 75–63)

133 See Philo in *Spec. Laws* I. under LX. 332: "These are they who are symbolically called by the law the sons of a harlot. For as mothers who are harlots do not know who is the real father of their children, and cannot register him accurately, but have many, or I might almost say all men, their lovers and associates, the same is the case with those who are ignorant of the one true God. For, inventing a great number whom they falsely call gods, they are blinded as to the most important of all existing things which they ought to have thoroughly learnt, if not alone, at all events, as the first and greatest of all things from their earliest childhood; for what can be a more honourable thing to learn than the knowledge of the true and living God?"

134 Cf Van der Watt (2000b:296–303).

135 See the footnote above in which I have clearly indicated that this section depends and builds heavily on the insights of my doctoral promotor Van der Watt (2000a and 2000b).

136 Cf. Jn 5:23, 36, 37; 6:44, 57; 8:16, 18, 42; 10:36; 11:42; 12:49; 17:8, 21, 23, 25; 20:21. Van der Watt (2000a) maintains that the elements of mission that occur in the Gospel originate from the social conventions of the ancient world (Jewish practices as well as elements of Greco-Roman practice). Bühner (1977); Borgen (1986); Miranda (1977) discuss these Greco-Roman mission practices. Witherington (1995:140–141) discusses the concept of agency in the Gospel according to John. He believes that the concept of agency can summarised in one sentence: "A person's agent is himself" (1995:140): The agent receives full authority to perform certain tasks or deliver certain messages on the behalf of the sender; The agent must be received and treated like the sender would have been; A transgression against the agent was seen as a transgression against the sender himself. Similarly, a positive treatment of the agent was viewed as a positive treatment of the sender himself.

137 According to Van der Watt (2000a:58, footnote 92), Waldstein (1990:310–312) handles the mission motif as 'a central view', 'fundamental conception' or 'Leitmotiv'. See also Okure (1988:1, 285); Harvey (1987:239–242); Meeks (1972); van der Merwe (1995:135ff.).

138 See Loader (1989); Van der Watt (1991a:106–117); Gnllka (1994:226–324).

says: "The mission is that of the Son by the Father. It is not just a mission, but a mission of a family for the sake of the family, since Jesus came to gather those who belong to the Father (6:37; 17:9–10). Köstenberger (2004:188) notes that: "Authorized representatives were not unique to Judaism. The Roman *legatus*, for instance, fulfilled a similar role. To this day, the failure to honor an ambassador is a failure to honor the government that he or she represents." The Father sends his Son to the world (10:36; 11:42) with a very important purpose,¹³⁹ to give eternal life to those who believe (3:16; 6:32). The Father's commission is the Son's basic motive and motivator. It is thus clear that God sends Jesus to reorient humanity from an existential state of death to an existential state of life (cf. 5:24). This state of life leads to a comprehensive re-presentation of reality. God now becomes Father and the believer now becomes part of a new family (1:12).

The following elements are present in the mission motif:¹⁴⁰ The Son is the sent Agent; The Father is his primary sender;¹⁴¹ The Father's *primary motivation* is *love* and the *primary result* must ultimately be the reception of *life* (3:16). In 3:16, we see that *love is the primary motivation* of the Son's mission. With this purpose and goal God sends Jesus to the visible earthly sphere (14:9–10): He must bring life (3:16; 20:30–31). God saves people out of love and pure grace. Salvation is God's gift to humanity.¹⁴² In other words, there is no mention of human merit. The mere presence of Jesus should then be seen as abundant grace (1:16–17). In this sense, salvation is an act initiated by God and executed in the context of love. This was also the case with the lame man. He received healing and brand new life possibilities, but he did not deserve any of it (Salier 2004:97). As God's Agent, the Son operates as a middle man or mediator between spiritual and physical realities. As such, the Son mediates spiritual realities and qualities like love, truth, light, life, healing and so on, to those who are 'under'.¹⁴³

139 See De Boer (1996:97–99); Loader (1989:76–77).

140 Van der Watt (2000a:20) notes: "Agency in John most probably refers to the Old Testament practice of sending a prophet. The ordinary secular practice of sending someone actually shares the same characteristics."

141 See Borgen (1986:67–78). Compare 5:24, 37–38; 8:18, 42; 12:49; 14:24.

142 Carson (1991:253) says: "Just as he chose one man out of the crowd of ill people by Bethesda (v. 6), so he chooses those to whom he gives life (cf. 15:16)."

143 Since literature on these themes is plentiful, we will not presently discuss them in any detail. Van der Watt (2000a) points to the following sources: Bühner (1977); Miranda (1972, 1977); Nicholson (1983); Loader (1989); Mercer (1990:619–624); Robinson (1985:356ff.); Okure (1988); Waldstein (1990:311–333); Van der Merwe (1995:135–247); Thompson (1997:223ff.); Köstenberger (1998); Borgen (1986); Meeks (1972); Ashton (1991:312–317).

Physical (and ‘social’)¹⁴⁴ illness and death are seen as things that take away life and its subsequent potentialities. Further, above, it was argued that the author, in his portrayal of the healing narrative, sketched a scene from his own world that testifies to death. Likewise, humanity is also trapped in an existential state of death (5:24). As such, healthy relationships and existential possibilities are not possible between God and humanity. Healing is connected to life in that healing or restoration enables someone to live and to experience the qualitative possibilities related to it. The ability of the Son to create biological and socio-religious life possibilities from a situation of death and bleakness illustrates, in all truth, that he also has the ability to create eschatological (eternal) life, together with the resultant life possibilities within the family of God (1:12). When Jesus heals people, it is seen as the work of God and as something God would have done himself, “had he personally been on earth”. God bestows upon Jesus, the Son,¹⁴⁵ the power to give eternal life to those who belong to the Father (3:31–36; 5:19–23).¹⁴⁶ Throughout, there is evidence of a particularly unique relationship¹⁴⁷ between the Father and the Son¹⁴⁸ (ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο—1:18).¹⁴⁹ The Son can reveal the Father to the world because he alone saw the Father (Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε—1:18; 6:46) and was taught by Him (7:29; 17:25). Therefore, He is in a unique position to reveal the Father (ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο—1:18; 3:11, 13).¹⁵⁰ The Son can act as a witness, since He knows where he comes from (ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐρχόμενος—3:31) and whereto he will return (ὅτι οἶδα πόθεν ἦλθον καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγω—8:14).¹⁵¹ It is because of the fact that he comes from above that

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- 144 In antiquity, ‘illness’ was associated with impurity and carried with it certain socio-religious implications. Today, deaf or blind people are not thought of as unclean or sick. Modern Western thought distinguishes between the physical morbidity of a person and his status as an individual. Within the ancient Mediterranean context, a person’s identity was linked to his morbidity. If his body was unclean, the whole person was unclean. See Neyrey et al. (1991:67vv.; 181vv.).
- 145 Reinhartz (1992:31) notes that the terms “Son of God” and “Son” tend to appear in contexts where subjects like the agency of Jesus or the Mission of the Son are discussed.
- 146 See Loader (1989:76vv.).
- 147 See Van der Merwe (1995:249–254).
- 148 Käsemann (1968:11) points out that the mission motif must be understood within the context of the unity between Father and Son. The mission is indeed possible only because of this unity.
- 149 See De Jonge (1978:49) as well as (1991); Ashton (1991:312–317).
- 150 Joh 7:29; 8:42; 13:3; 16:27–28, 30.
- 151 Joh 3:13, 31; 6:38, 50; 8:23. See also Davies (1992:174–181) with regard to the difference between these two dimensions.

Jesus, as transformation agent, possesses the ability to give life like the Creator-God (1:4).¹⁵² Jesus argues, in John 7:23, that the Jews fail to recognise the life-creating reality of God and, as a result, also fail to notice the essence of what he had received from God (7:13). Since they have not been born again, the Jews lack the ability to notice the implications of the healing act's spiritual truth (3:3—ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν, οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ.). That which has been born out of the flesh, is flesh and that which has been born out of spirit, is spirit (3:6—τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς σὰρξ ἐστίν, καὶ τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος πνεῦμά ἐστιν). In other words, it is only in relational and revelatory terms that the spiritual truth, introduced by Jesus, can be understood (1:12; 3:3–6). By not recognising the life-creating reality of the healing narrative, and by not being reoriented by it, the Jews remain trapped in a deadly existence, characterised by spiritual blindness (cf. 9:40–41; 12:40). In a similar fashion, as the healing narrative unfolds, the reader is confronted with the all-important choice of noticing the life-creating ability of Jesus and the spiritual implications thereof. In other words, the healing narrative is used more-or-less symbolically in that it points to the larger cosmic narrative (Universal Divine Narrative) of the Gospel.

EXCURSUS: God teaches and trains his Son

In John 7:14–24 Jesus teaches at a feast. John 7:15 tells us that the Jews (Judean crowds and Jewish authorities) were amazed at Jesus' insight and unusual ability to “carry on a sustained discourse in the manner of the rabbis” (Köstenberger 2004:232). The logical question they would have asked was who could have taught Jesus these insights? Neyrey (1996:119) informs us that, in the ancient times, the social status and honour of an individual was determined by the identity of his teacher. A learned person was always thought of as a reflection of his teacher. Köstenberger (2009:233) remarks that “The age in which Jesus lived did not prize originality. If Jesus had acknowledged that he was self-taught or had originated his own message, he would have been immediately

152 Witherington (1995:140) says: “The son could do nothing beyond the scope of the power and commissioned authority given to him.” In antiquity, an only son usually performed certain tasks or communicated with outside groups on the father's behalf. A good and honourable son always did exactly what the father told him to do. This kind of son would not do anything if his father did not tell him to. Complete and total obedience to the father's orders was a precondition for agency (Witherington 1995:140).

discredited for arrogance".¹⁵³ The fact however, is that Jesus' answer was far worse! He claimed to have been taught by God! The remark of the Jewish opponents is ironic: They don't know the identity of Jesus' teacher, even though his knowledge indicates that he must have had an important and well-known teacher. Jesus reacts to this by revealing the identity of his teacher as the One who sent him, meaning God (cf. 7:16). He is not looking to win honour for himself, but to enhance his teacher's honour, who sent him (Van der Watt 2000a:60).

Van der Watt (2000a:22) describes the training of Jesus in 5:17–30 as follows:

- The Father shows his works to the Son (5:20),¹⁵⁴
- The things Jesus does, he learnt from the Father (8:28).
- John 5:21 defines these works in terms of the giving of life.¹⁵⁵
- The activities of healing in both 5:17 and 9:3–4, are seen as works.
- The works shown to the Son by the Father serve as training for the subsequent skills learnt.
- This serves as background for the statement that the Father is in Jesus and does his works through the Son (14:10–11).¹⁵⁶
- That is why Jesus may say in 5:17 that he works just like the Father.
- The works done by Jesus are carried out under the chieftaincy of and dependency on the Father.¹⁵⁷
- This is also indicative of the unity between Father and Son.¹⁵⁸

153 Van der Watt (2000a:21) says: "Learners bore the stamps of their mentors and teachers". Similarly, Neyrey (1996:120) holds that "young men were only as good as their teachers and those who formed them in the social values enshrined in their past culture". Neyrey (1996:119) is correct when he says that Jesus would also have had honour in the eyes of the Jewish leaders, if he had an honourable teacher.

154 In connection with this, see Joh 3:21; 5:20, 36; 6:28; 7:3, 21; 10:25, 37.

155 When one considers the various conceptions of contrast, it becomes clear that this mission is headed for a revolution (turn-around) of the *status quo*: *life* reveals itself where *death* used to reign; *salvation* finds those who were *trapped*; *truth* replaces *deceit*; *light* shines through and demolishes *darkness* etc.

156 Carson (1991:251) says: "The Son by his obedience to his Father is acting in such a way that he is *revealing* the Father, doing the Father's deeds, performing the Father's will. The Son is 'exegeting' or 'narrating' the Father."

157 De Jonge (1978:49).

158 Carson (1991:253) says: "Although the Son 'can do nothing by himself' (v. 19), his will, his pleasure, his choices are so completely at one with the father that is no less true to say

It is clear that images of the family are in view here (5:17)¹⁵⁹ One detects a particularly intimate relationship between the Father and the Son.¹⁶⁰ This view is further developed and substantiated by John 5:19–23.¹⁶¹ The dynamics of the family metaphor lends Jesus his honour and status, as well as his legitimacy and the authenticity of his truthful message (cf. 7:18) (Van der Watt 2000a:60–63). Jesus justifies his own words and deeds, including his ability to give life, by claiming an intimate relationship between him and his Father. In 5:19–20, Jesus declares: “... οὐ δύνάται ὁ υἱὸς ποιεῖν ἄφ’ ἑαυτοῦ οὐδέν ἐὰν μὴ τι βλέπῃ τὸν πατέρα ποιοῦντα· ἃ γὰρ ἂν ἐκεῖνος ποιῇ, ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ.”¹⁶²

Van der Watt (2000a:22–23) convincingly indicates that the pattern of instruction put forward by 5:19–24 fully correlates with known patterns of instruction in ancient father-son relationships.¹⁶³ Like an average father would instruct his son, so the Father¹⁶⁴ instructs the Son.¹⁶⁵ In 8:28, Jesus indeed uses the word ‘learn’ (καθὼς ἐδίδαξέν με ὁ πατήρ) to explain the interactive nature of the instructional situation between him and his

the crucial decisions are his. Unlike Elijah, Jesus is no mere instrument of divine power.” In relation to this, see the following texts: 10:25, 32, 37, 38; 14:11; 15:24; see also 3:21.

- 159 In this context, certain socio-cultural aspects must be taken into account. This learning process is used within the context of this family-symbol as a metaphor. See Van der Watt (2000b) in this connection. See De Jonge (1978:49–50).
- 160 Carson (1991:249), Dodd (1968:30–40) and Schnelle (2009:665) highlight the unique relationship between the Father and the Son and the reality of reciprocal knowledge (See especially Schnelle 2009:665).
- 161 Brown (1971:218) illustrates that the actions of Jesus can be compared to that of an apprentice who learns a certain trade from his master. The apprentice does every—and anything exactly like his master. See also Dodd (1968:30–40); Van Tilborg (1993:29–30).
- 162 Newman and Nida (1980:153) argue that the entire argument of 5:19–29 is a result of the statement Jesus made about the unity between himself and the Father. The statement boils down to the fact that the Son can’t do anything on his own, but only that which he saw the Father do. The content of these actions of both Father and Son essentially consists of the giving of life (19–21). See Brown (1971:218).
- 163 *Tosefta Qiddushin* 1, 11b enunciates the obligation of a father towards his son: He must let his son be circumcised, he must release him, teach him the Torah, teach him his trade, and ensure that he gets a wife. There were obviously different criteria for education back then. See e.g. Shelton (1988:104). In the Greco-Roman context, private tutors were procured by the elite or children were sent to schools (see Shelton 1988:109) In the case of Jesus, God taught him his trade, which was to give life.
- 164 Van Tilborg (1993:31).
- 165 See Koester (1995:87).

Father (Schnelle 2009:663–666). There is a “mutual dynamic interrelation” between Father and Son in being and work (Schnelle 2009:665).

Already before the founding of the world, God had a plan to save humanity in love and grace (3:16). He had decided then already that he would send his Son so (with the purpose) that those who believe in him would not perish, but have eternal life (3:16).

God invests all the necessary energy in his Son. He teaches and instructs the Son. The Son is a reflection of his Father and does nothing out of himself. He only does that which he saw and heard his Father do and say (5:19vv.). The message and will of the sender is concentrated and outlined in the being of the Son, who gives life.

The Son becomes human and teaches other human beings about God. In the first place, He fulfils his mission by bringing new life (3:16, 5:21). Not only does he duplicate that which he saw and heard God do and say (5:19), but he also expects other people to do the same.

Perkin (1988:657–662) opines: “The original purpose of Jewish education was to teach children to know and understand their special relationship with God, to teach them to serve him, and to educate them in ‘holiness’. Later Jewish education included character development and the history of God’s people (particularly through rehearsing his acts of deliverance). Because of that education, the Jews knew the Mosaic law and their own history, and during periods of subjection to foreign powers they were able to maintain their national pride. In modern times they have re-established themselves as a nation”. In 8:28, John’s Jesus uses the word ‘learn’ (ἐδίδαξεν/διδάσκω) to explain the intimate interactive nature of the instructional relationship between him and his Father. These words of Jesus refer to the way in which an ancient father taught his child.¹⁶⁶ In almost every aspect of life, especially his son’s future occupation, the father was responsible for the training of his son. In this way, the father ensured that his son would be well equipped for those tasks that lay ahead.

The same holds true for the relationship between the Father and the Son. The Father loves the Son,¹⁶⁷ and, for this reason, shows him everything he does (v. 20). Whatever the Son sees his Father do, he also does

¹⁶⁶ Brown (1971:218) and Barrett (1978:259–260) describe the ways in which a child was taught by his Father. They both refer to the work of Dodd.

¹⁶⁷ See Carson (1991:251). John 3:35 already described the relationship between the Father and the Son as one that contained love. John 3:35 uses the word ἀγαπᾷ, while John 5:20 uses the word φιλεῖ. Carson holds that there is no essential difference between the two

(v. 19). In other words, the Son follows the example of his Father and duplicates what he has learnt.¹⁶⁸ ‘Naturally’, the Son does what the Father does, since he was ‘trained’ to do so (v. 19). Jesus’ authority to give life (5:21) and to judge (5:22) rests in his unique instructional relationship with the Father. Therefore, he also receives the same honour as the Father does (5:23). In 5:23, Jesus claims that he was sent by the Father to do and to say certain things in order to reveal the Father in that way. In this sense, Jesus acts on the Father’s behalf.

The necessary question then is: What are these ‘works’ that the Son saw his Father do? (Schnelle 2009:666).

John 5:21–22 and 5:26–27 tells us that the ‘work’ of the Father entails *raising people from the dead, giving life and judging*. In exactly the same way as his Father, Jesus gives life. He does this because his Father gave him that life and made it intrinsically part of him (5:26). Jesus can give life to whomever he pleases (5:21). This emphasises the fact that God the Father empowered¹⁶⁹ Jesus and gave him the necessary knowledge and might to perform this task (see also 3:34–35). Similarly, Jesus judges like God would judge (5:30). This idea is further intensified by pointing out that it is no longer God who judges (5:22). In 8:16, while defending himself against the Pharisees, Jesus says: “ἡ κρίσις ἡ ἐμὴ ἀληθινή ἐστιν, ὅτι μόνος οὐκ εἰμί, ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πέμψας με πατήρ”. In other words, as the instructional process unfolds, it is not only knowledge that is transferred, but also authority and the ability to execute certain deeds. John 3:35 confirms this principle by pointing out that the Father hands everything over to Jesus and enables him to do what he does (See also 17:2). John 5:23–24 says that when the time comes for Him to judge and give life, Jesus will receive honour like God would have received honour (5:23–24).

terms, since they both contextually express the same reality. The pure nature of this love culminates on the cross-event, where the Son willingly lays down his life.

168 Van der Watt (2000a) holds that this was the chief way in which knowledge was transferred: “Children were expected to carefully observe their parents and then copy them.” See Shelton (1988:118). McGrath (1998:472) also points out the fact that sons stood under the authority of their fathers. See also Dt 21:18.

169 See Schnackenburg (1977:134–135). This theme is repeated in the gospel more than once. John 3:35–36 says that the Father loves the Son and that he has placed everything in his hands. (ὁ πατήρ ἀγαπᾷ τὸν υἱὸν καὶ πάντα δέδωκεν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ). John 17:2 also says that the Father bestowed upon the Son the power to give life (καθὼς ἔδωκας αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν πάσης σαρκός, ἵνα πᾶν ὃ δέδωκας αὐτῷ δώσῃ αὐτοῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον). This power over life and death also gives the Son power over *his own* life and death (10:17–18). These statements must be read in conjunction with one another and in relation with 5:20–21.

This will also illustrate that God is still at work (5:17). *The work of the Father, which is qualified as the ability to give life and to judge, is continued in and through the acts of Jesus.* Also in the healing narratives we see that Jesus gives life to the ‘dead’ legs of a lame man. There weren’t any existential possibilities before Jesus creates brand new life and all of its subsequent potentialities. However, the healing acts are in the first instance not exclusively aimed at the giving of biological and socio-religious life possibilities. These actually point toward those ‘greater’ life possibilities Jesus brings, namely: eternal life and its subsequent existential possibilities within God’s family.

The most vital and primary instruction the Father gave the Son was to present believers with life (12:49–50; cf. 3:17; 6:39–40, 57). The question is how this type of life can become visible. The answer is clear: This truth can only be *revealed* by having *interaction* with the world in a relevant manner. That is why the Word had to become flesh (1:14—Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν). According to Van der Watt (2000a:28), this interaction presupposes an epiphany.¹⁷⁰ Indeed, John 1:18 is not unclear about this: “Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο.”—1:18; cf. 17:4–8; 16:25). The works completed by the Son, as the divine transformation agent, are ultimately works that bring God’s plan to fruition (5:36; 9:4)¹⁷¹ Thompson (1997:224) is therefore correct when he remarks: “[W]hat Jesus does is God’s work; God works through Jesus.” It is then precisely within the context of illness, which is characterised as a deadly existential situation, that Jesus, as the divine transformation agent, illustrates God’s life-creating motives. It is for this reason that the Father empowers the Son (3:35; 13:3; 17:2) to give life like him (7:16–18).¹⁷² He does nothing on his own account and only seeks the honour of the one who sent him.¹⁷³ Van der Watt (2000a:31) says: “Although it might look as if Jesus is pointing to Himself in His revelation, He is actually pointing to the Father through Himself, because He is the agent and Revealer of the Father (1:18).”¹⁷⁴ After a successful completion of the mission, the agent returns to give an account to the one who sent him.¹⁷⁵ He gives an account

170 John 8:19; 12:45; 13:20.

171 See Van der Merwe (1995:308–309); Ashton (1991:308).

172 John 3:11, 32, 34; 5:19; 7:28; 8:26, 28, 38, 40; 9:4; 12:49–50; 14:24; 15:15.

173 John 3:34; 5:30; 6:38; 7:16–18; 8:28–29; 12:49; 14:24, 31; 15:10.

174 For more information on this subject, see Davies (1992:170–173); Ashton (1991:448–478); Nicholson (1983:21); De Boer (1996:118ff.).

175 See Van der Merwe (1995:318–319).

of what he did, but also gives advice with an eye towards the future (17:24). One of the most important results of the Son's mission was to have had people accept the message Jesus brought from God (17:6–8) and to have created a new family of God (14:3, 23, 24). This missionary process can now be continued (14:12; 17:18; 20:21; 21:1vv.) with the Paraclete's assistance (14:16).¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ See Loader (1989:84–85); Van Tilborg (1993:26). Van der Watt (2000a:33) informs us that it was common practice to appoint a third party to continue with the mission.

The Healing of the Blind Man: An Exegetical Study of John 9:1–41¹

Macro Analysis

5.1 Positioning of the Text within the Context of the Whole

In order to understand this particular healing narrative, it is necessary to position it within the context of the whole, and to account for its interrelatedness with other passages. The healing of the blind man (John 9) is positioned between two very important chapters (John 8 and John 10). Both the terminology and the themes that appear in John 9 are taken up in chapter 10.

Culpepper (1983:93), in his discussion on the development of the Gospel's plot, is of the opinion that, within the context of the first eight chapters, the conflict between Jesus and the Jews reaches a climax in chapter 8.² Although many of the same themes are taken up again, the central theme of this passage revolves around the heritage of Jesus in order to classify his identity. The Jews argue that they know who the father of Jesus is. According to their knowledge, he is the son of Joseph, the carpenter (cf. 8:19). That is why in Jn 7:15, they questioned his education: "Πῶς οὗτος γράμματα οἶδεν μὴ μεμαθηκώς."³ Van der Watt (2000b:272) rightly points out that the social status and honour of a person depended, among other things, on his descent and his education. The Jews were proud of their heritage and honour as descendants of Abraham (8:33). But Jesus responds to this by stating that they do not act like children of Abraham, but rather like children of the devil (8:44—ὁμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστὲ καὶ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν θέλετε ποιεῖν). In chapter 8 Jesus turns the table on genealogical descension as sufficient proof for filiation within God's family, in favour of filiation proved and made clear through people's existential conduct. In reaction, the Jews responded that Jesus was a Samaritan, possessed

1 Some sections of this chapter have been published in a journal as an article, as required by the University of Pretoria where doctoral research should appear in peer reviewed journals (see Kok 2012b). The information has been used again here with permission from Dr. Chris De Wet, editor of the *Journal of Early Christian History*.

2 See Hanson & Oakman (1998).

3 Translation (NIV): "How did this man get such learning without having studied?"

by the devil (8:48—Οὐ καλῶς λέγομεν ἡμεῖς ὅτι Σαμαρίτης εἶ σὺ καὶ δαιμόνιον ἔχεις;). Through their conduct, however, the Jews convincingly demonstrate that they behave like their father, the devil, and as such, they are children of the devil. By implication, they are spiritually blind. They choose to deny the truth and embrace the lie (8:44–45). The scene ends with the declaration by Jesus that he had existed even before Abraham was born with the implication that he is therefore more important than Abraham (8:58—πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι ἐγὼ εἰμι.). In response the Jews wanted to lapidate him (8:59). At this stage of the development of the plot of the Gospel, it becomes clear to the reader that there is no hope of reconciliation between Jesus and the Jews.

According to Culpepper (1983:93), an “interpretative interlude” is formed by chapter 9 and the first part of chapter 10. He postulates: “The pitch of the hostility seems to drop, and the manoeuvrings to arrest Jesus make little progress.” Chapter 9 also develops the line of thought that was initiated in 8:12 where Jesus says that he is the light of the world (ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου). In John 9, Jesus gives sight to a blind man who was ‘received and born in darkness’. Gradually, the man regains spiritual insight, while the blindness of the Pharisees is revealed (9:39–41). Meanwhile, the Jews attempted to gather condemning information to use against Jesus. They also threatened to ban from the synagogue anyone who confesses Jesus as the Messiah (cf. 9:22; Martyn). The existence of this threat explains why people feared the Jewish leaders (cf. 7:13; 12:42; 16:3). In this context, Jesus depicts himself as the Good Shepherd (10:11) and at the same time, compares the Jews with thieves that steal and destroy (cf. John 10). In the process, Jesus promises to lay down his life for his sheep (10:11) but also promises to take it back up again (10:17–18). No one will be able to take it away from him; he offers it up himself. In John 10:19 we find a division among the Jews (10:19) about Jesus’ descent. Jesus continues to declare his unity and intimate relationship with the Father (10:30), and it is for that very declaration that the Jews wanted to lapidate him (10:31) in order to punish him for what they judged to be blasphemous utterances (10:33). But, once again they fail in their attempt to take Jesus captive (10:39) and Jesus retreats from Jerusalem. John 11 further develops the themes of life and death within the context of Lazarus’s resurrection. In this context, Jesus is portrayed as the resurrection and the life (11:25). According to Jewish thought, the ability to give life rested solely with God and should be impossible for Jesus to do. After the resurrection of Lazarus, the Jews were all the more determined to persecute and kill Jesus (11:53—ἀπ’ ἐκεῖνης οὖν τῆς ἡμέρας ἐβουλεύσαντο ἵνα ἀποκτείνωσιν αὐτόν.).

Stibbe (1993:73) notices that chapters 2–4 represent Jesus’ first circular movement, while chapters 5–10 represent his second circular movement.

- *First Route*: Cana—Jerusalem—Cana
- *Second Route*: Jerusalem—Galilee—Jerusalem.

The following diagram illustrates the relation between the latter and the healing narratives:

-
- – *Jerusalem*: The *healing* of the *lame* man at Bethesda (5:1–18)
 - – *Galilee*: Jesus feeds the crowds (6:1–15)
 - – *Galilee*: Jesus walks on water (6:16–21)
 - – *Jerusalem*: The *healing* of the *blind* man (9:1–8).

The diagram clearly shows that both healings in this section (Chapters 5–10) take place in Jerusalem.⁴

EXCURSUS: A Comparison between the healing narratives of John 5 and 9
The healing narrative of John 5 demonstrates noticeable similarities with the healing narrative of John 9:⁵

TABLE 8 *A comparison between John 5 and 8*

Chapter 5	Chapter 9
Jerusalem festival (5:1)	Jerusalem festival: Tabernacles
Long history of illness (5:5)	Long history of illness (9:1)
The man is marginalised (5:8)	The man is marginalised (9:8)
Jesus initiates the interaction (5:6)	Jesus initiates the interaction (9:6)
Healing on the Sabbath (5:9)	Healing on the Sabbath (9:14)
So-called “Old, proven infirmity”	So-called “Old, proven infirmity”

4 It is commonly accepted that the Gospel was written after the fall of the temple in 70 CE. Culpepper (1998:148) notices that the author repeatedly tells the story of Jesus within the context of Jewish feasts. He remarks that “at each festival Jesus does or says things that show that He is the fulfilment of what is celebrated during the particular festival.” The other important matter needing to be taken into account is that the growing opposition from the Jews develops all the more in this section. Narratologically, the healing acts are built around the internal tension that is unfolding. See Culpepper (1993:196).

5 See table in Ridderbos (1997:1990); Culpepper (1993:139–140); Stibbe (1993:10) and Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:109).

Chapter 5	Chapter 9
Illness and sin	Illness and sin
Don't sin anymore (5:14)	Who sinned? (9:2)
Pool: Bethesda (5:2)	Pool: Siloam (9:7)
Command (stand up and pick up—5:7), obedience (5:9) and healing.	Command (go wash—9:7); obedience and healing (9:7)
Jewish questioning (5:9b–6)	Jewish questioning (5:9–6)
Healed man	Healed man
Questioning	Questioning
Accusation: transgressed the Sabbath	Accusation: transgressed the Sabbath
Defence (5:31–47)	Defence (9:30–34)
Form: Healing/ Controversy	Form: Healing/ Controversy
Ideological angle: Faith	Ideological angle: Faith
Question: Who is He? (5:12–13)	Question: Where is He?
The man did not know	The man does not know
	Question: Who is He?
	Prophet! (9:17)
Meeting after healing	Meeting after healing
Jesus finds the man (5:14)	Jesus finds the man (9:35)
No Christophany	Christophany (9:35vv.)
Man reports to the Jews	Man believes (9:35–38)
	Man defends Jesus
Judgment: The “wheel turns”	Judgment: The “wheel turns”
They judge Jesus (5:9–16)	They judge Jesus (9:13–34)
Jesus does not judge them (5:38–47)	Jesus judges them (9:39–41)

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Carson (1991:337) choose to combine 8:12–10:42 as a unit under the title: “Radical Confrontation: Climactic Signs, Works, and Wonders.”⁶ Thematically, the healing narrative in John 9 (9:5) is joined to the feast of Tabernacles

6 See Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:168). He also binds 9:1–10:42 together under the title: “Judeans’ Reaction to Jesus’ Bringing Light and Life to Jerusalem.”

(John 8:12)⁷ against the background of the culminating challenges directed at Jesus by the Jews (Jn 8:12–59).⁸ It has already been argued that the reference to Jewish festivals in John 5–10 serves as hermeneutical key:⁹ In each respective case, the focus is on Jesus as the fulfillment of that which is being celebrated by that particular festival.¹⁰ For example, certain rituals were performed during the feast of Tabernacles—rituals for which the symbols of light, water and so on, were important.¹¹ When Jesus reveals himself in John 7:37–39 as the “living water,” and in John 8:12 and 9:5 as the “Light of the world,” and, immediately thereafter, performs a healing act where he makes a blind man see (Jn 9), the constituent elements of the feast of the Tabernacles, is spiritually and existentially fulfilled in and through him.¹² This interpretation makes it clear that chapter 9 builds on the content of chapters 7–9. Chapter 9, in turn, flows over into the Shepherd motif of chapter 10, where a sharp contrast is sketched between the good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep (10:11) and the Jewish leaders who not only cling to the lie of their father, the devil, but also, to top everything off, reveal themselves as murderers (8:44).¹³ Chapter 10 takes place against the background of the feast of the dedication of the temple (10:22).¹⁴

7 Carson (1991:359): “Thematically, this chapter is tied to the Feast of Tabernacles (ch. 8) through the explicit reference to Jesus as the light of the world (9:5; cf. 8:12).” See also Beasley-Murray (1987:148).

8 Ridderbos (1997:324) says: “In ch.8 Jesus’ confrontation with “the Jews” reaches a stage that it has not yet reached in *(the)* Gospel and that will not be exceeded in the later dialogues.”

9 See Culpepper (1998:148).

10 Loader (2002:484–485). He rightly points out that Jesus is viewed as the fulfillment of the law by John. He directs attention to John’s typological referencing of the Old Testament and how Jesus is applied to those texts as the fulfillment of their spiritual meanings. These Old Testament texts include, among others: Sinai (1:14–18; 5:37b; 6:46); Jacob’s vision at Bethel (1:51); Moses and the lofted snake (3:14–15); Jacob’s well (4:4–26); provision of manna in the desert (6:5–15, 26–58). John presents Jesus as the fulfillment of the Law. Jesus brings something analogically similar to the Law, but the fulfillment thereof is of greater qualitative worth than the first. Hence, Jesus is the optimal fulfillment of the law. Also see Hanson (1991:109–112) in this regard.

11 See Stibbe (1993:96–97).

12 See Brown (1966:376). He refers to the pool of Siloam and the role it played during water ceremonies at the feast. The theme of light and darkness is similarly developed in 9:4–5—themes that played an important role during the feast of Tabernacles.

13 See Beasley-Murray (1987:148).

14 Carson (1991:359).

5.1.1 *Analysis of the Build-up of the Text*¹⁵

This pericope consists of seven scenes:¹⁶

1. *The healing miracle* is described in Cluster A (vv. 1–7);
2. *Four interrogation scenes* follow: Clusters B–E (vv. 8–34):
 - a. Questioning by the neighbours (vv. 8–12)
 - b. Questioning by the Pharisees (vv. 13–17)
 - c. Questioning of the parents by the Pharisees (vv. 18–23)
 - d. Further questioning of the man by the Pharisees (vv. 24–34)
3. Followed by *two discourses*: (Clusters F–G [vv. 35–41]),
 - e. Between Jesus and the blind man (vv. 35–38)
 - f. And between Jesus and the Jews (vv. 39–41).

Kysar (1986:148) rightly points out that this passage is a well-developed drama¹⁷ that consists of seven scenes, through which the author not only tells a story of healing, but also interweaves the symbolic meaning of that healing narrative into the drama.

5.1.2 *Summary of the Literary Setting*

- Already at the beginning, the author outlines the “*spatial setting*” (Siloam), as well as the “*occasional setting*” (Sabbath).¹⁸
- It is unlikely that this drama takes place directly after Jesus left the temple in 8:59 (Beasley-Murray 1987:153).
- The “*historical setting*” in which the actions take place, is best placed in the time-period shortly after the feast of Tabernacles.¹⁹
- The “*contemporary setting*” of the scene is depicted by 9:22, where the Jews agreed to ban those who confess Jesus as the Messiah, from the synagogue.

15 The Analysis of this text’s deployment can be found in the Appendix. Cf. also the work of Hwang (2004:138–143) that I have consulted.

16 See Beasley-Murray (1987:152); Witherington (1995:134); Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:169).

17 J.L. Martyn approaches this chapter as a drama with at least two active characters. See Beasley-Murray (1987:153); Wengst (2000:350–351).

18 See Beasley-Murray (1987:153–154).

19 Carson (1991:359): “Thematically, this chapter is tied to the Feast of Tabernacles (ch. 8) through the explicit reference to Jesus as the light of the world (9:5; cf. 8:12).” Cf. Kysar (1986:148).

5.2 A Detailed Analysis of John 9

5.2.1 *An Exegetical Study of John 9:1–7*

John 9:1–2

Καὶ παράγων εἶδεν ἄνθρωπον τυφλὸν ἐκ γενετῆς.²⁰ 2 καὶ ἠρώτησαν αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντες, Ῥαββί, τίς ἥμαρτεν, οὗτος ἢ οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, ἵνα τυφλὸς γεννηθῇ;²¹

Just as before, in the previous healing narrative, it is Jesus who initiates the interaction in this new context (cf. 5:6; Ridderbos 1997:335; Barrett 1978:358).²² The verb *παράγων* and the rest of the pericope fail to provide enough evidence to allow a precise determination of exactly *where and when* the interaction between Jesus and the blind man took place. One can assume the likelihood that Jesus remained in Jerusalem during the time-period that elapsed between the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Dedication. The following argument strengthens such an assumption: Chapter 9 is bound up with chapters 8 and 10 (Carson 1991:359). In each case, Jesus is held up as the *fulfilment* of the content being celebrated by that particular festival, as noted above (See Stibbe 1993:96–97). As such, Jesus reveals himself in John 7:37–39 as the “living water,” and in John 8:12 and 9:5 as the “Light of the world,” and, immediately thereafter, performs a healing act where he makes a blind man see (John 9).²³ This interpretation makes it clear that chapter 9 builds on the content of chapters 7–9.²⁴

20 Translation: As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth.

21 Translation: ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

22 See Brown (1966:371); Wengst (2000:351); Schnelle (1998:168). Jesus is often presented by the gospels as the One who heals the blind (cf. Mt 9:27–31; 12:22–23; Mt 20:29–34; Mk 8:22–26).

23 See Brown (1966:376). He refers to the pool of Siloam and the role it played during water ceremonies at the feast. The theme of light and darkness is similarly developed in 9:4–5—themes that played an important role during the feast of Tabernacles.

24 Kysar (1986:148) refers to the symbolic meaning of John 9 and its relation to the foregoing passages: “It is designed once again to raise the inevitable conflict between the revelation and the established religion and to show the tragic sense in which humanity is blinded by its own inhibition in this world to the truth offered in Christ.” Even though John is here specifically criticising the blindness of Judaism, Kysar (1986:148) holds that this text

Chapter 9, in turn, flows over into the Shepherd motif of chapter 10, where a sharp contrast is sketched between the good Shepherd and the Jewish leaders who are blind.²⁵ Chapter 10 takes place against the background of the feast of the dedication of the temple (10:22).²⁶ As a result, one can assume that Jesus remained in Jerusalem during the time-period that elapsed between the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Dedication.²⁷

From the perspective of the reader, the word “ἔργα” has, up to this point in the gospel, been closely related to the term “σημεῖα”. In this healing narrative of Jn 9, the author once again takes up these terms. Their mutual interdependence creates within the reader an expectation of a dramatic interaction of transformation or miracle to come. Salier (2004:111–112) agrees and mentions: “From the reader’s point of view, the use of ἔργα and its close connection established with σημεῖα earlier in the narrative, set the scene for another action by Jesus. When the healing is identified as a σημεῖα (9.16), the close relationship to the two word groups is further confirmed.”

In my view, this connection is enhanced by Jesus’ pronouncement in John 9:4 that: “ἡμᾶς δεῖ ἐργάζεσθαι τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντός με ἕως ἡμέρας ἐστὶν ἔρχεται νύξ ὅτε οὐδεὶς δύναται ἐργάζεσθαι.” In the previous healing narratives, we propounded that, within the context of σημεῖα, the works of God (ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντός με) are related to re-creation. The question is whether this connection is also discernible in the healing narrative presently under discussion?

clearly refers to any human institution that attempts to safeguard institutional values and practices (tradition) against the unexpected revelation of God. With this opinion, Kysar suggests that God’s revelation occurred during the time of Jesus, but that it still takes place today. It might be the case that man-made traditions and structures later contradicted the heart of the gospel. In these cases, the revelation of God will clearly illuminate such contradictions. One may call to mind the recent blindness of the Biblically-justified Apartheid theology. Many of us were blind for the socio-religious marginalisation that took place in the process.

25 See Beasley-Murray (1987:148).

26 Cf. Carson (1991:359).

27 Hendriksen (1976:72) says: “Incorrect is the view that it occurred at the feast of the Dedication (in December). The time of the feast is not reached until 10:22.

A Situation of Crisis and Disorientation: A Man who had been Blind Since Birth

While Jesus was walking away from the Temple, (παράγων)²⁸ he saw (εἶδεν)²⁹ a man (ἄνθρωπον) who had been blind (τυφλόν) “since birth” (ἐκ γενετῆς)³⁰ (See Kysar³¹ 1986:148).³² Now, John is the only gospel that mentions the healing of someone who had been blind since birth.³³ Hence, Köstenberger (2004:281) is correct when he remarks: “The man’s blindness from birth raises the ‘ante’ for the ensuing miracle and makes it all the more striking . . .” In the preceding healing acts, it was argued that the portrayal of these healing acts as *σημεῖα*, John paints extraordinary pictures to serve as examples of the life-creating ability of Jesus. It seems that John is applying the same technique here.

Blindness as a Result of Sin?

The disciples’ first reaction after the healing took place was to ask: ‘Who sinned?’³⁴ (τίς ἥμαρτεν—cf. 9:2).³⁵ The sentence structure “ὥνα τυφλὸς γεννηθῆ”³⁶

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- 28 Verb: Present, Participle, Active and Nominative Masculine Singular of παράγω. This sentence directly follows upon the conversation between Jesus and the Jews. The Jews wanted to lapidate Jesus, but Jesus left the temple and went into hiding (8:59). Köstenberger (2004:280) points out that this is the only place in John where this phrase appears. However, also see Mt 9:9; Mk 1:16; 2:14. Similar expressions also appear in Mt 2:9:27 and 20:30.
- 29 Verb: Aorist Indicative Active, 3rd Person, Masculine Singular of εἶδον. According to Ridderbos (1997:332), ‘seeing’ does not involve a passive type of vision, but one that results in action and response.
- 30 According to Newman and Nida (1980:297), the expression “ἐκ γενετῆς” is a Greek idiom.
- 31 Kysar (1986:148) notes: “The first scene (vv. 1–7) narrates the healing itself with masterful economy.”
- 32 Cf. also Mt 12:22–23; esp. 15:29–32; 20:29–34; Mk 8:22–26; Mk 10:46–52. According to Köstenberger (2004:277), both Matthew and Luke interpret Jesus’ healings of the blind against the background of Isaiah’s description of the Lord’s servant (Lk 4:18–10; Mt 11:5; Mt 15:30–31; 21:14; cf. Is 35:4–6; 61:1–2; cf. also Is 29:18; 42:7). John likewise presents Jesus within this framework (cf. esp. 12:38–41).
- 33 However, cf. Acts 3:2 and 14:8, where there is indeed mention of the healing of cripples who were crippled since birth.
- 34 Chrysostom (*Homily* 56.1) is of the opinion that the question in 9:2 is bound up with 5:14’s “μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε.” Conversely, Augustine (*Homily* 44.1) is of the opinion that the blind man represents the entire sinful world, which has been caught up in spiritual blindness since birth, thanks to Adam’s transgression. He holds that the blind man and his parents probably did sin, seeing as it is human to sin, but argues that their transgressions were not in this case the cause of this man’s blindness (*Homily* 44.3).
- 35 Verb: Aorist, Indicative, Active, 3rd Person, Singular of ἁμαρτάνω.
- 36 Conjunction ὥνα (with the result or consequence that) plus passive verb γεννηθῆ: Aorist, Subjunctive, Passive of γεννώ. The passive presumes that the subject is not doing the

indicates that the disciples connected the cause of the blindness with sin³⁷ (See Ridderbos 1997:332).³⁸ Craffert (1999:97) is correct when he says that: "In Jewish culture a close connection between sickness and sin can be seen from the earliest times (cf. 2 Ki 5; Dt 28:15, 20; cf. *Cant. Rab.* 1.6 §3; *Ruth Rab.* 6.4; Tg. Ps.-J of Dt 21:20)".³⁹ Schrage (1972:283) confirms this and states: "As sin and sickness are related (→ IV, 1092, 10 ff.), cf. b.Shab., 32b–33a, so acc. to the Jewish view, blindness is a divine punishment (→ 281, 4 ff.: 284, 17 f.), cf. b.Taan., 21a;

action of the verb, but that the subject is being acted upon. In other words, the subject 'receives' the action of the verb.

37 *Shabbath* 55a relates sin to 'illness' on the basis of Ezk 18:20. See also *Genesis Rabbah* 63.6, where there is mention of sin being committed in the mother's lap (Edwards 2004:99).

38 Ridderbos (1997:332) says that: "Their reaction is a question of theodicy that assumes the dogma of direct relationship between sin and sickness (and misfortune in general)." Freedman (1992: *ad loc*) holds that the blind were not excluded from the cult because of impurity. He says: "Apart from P, Deut 23:2, which says one with crushed testicles or a severed phallus cannot enter the 'congregation of the Lord' does not refer to natural bodily blemishes or to the specific issue of cultic access and thus cannot be used to prove blemishes exclude one from the sanctuary. 2 Sm 5:8, however, does represent a tradition where the blind and lame were excluded from the temple. But note that the basis for the custom is David's hatred of such persons, not impurity." Anderson (1989:84) reminds us that Gn 22:24 and 1 Sm 9:24 both state that the blind and lame will not enter the house (cf. Mi 3:12). He points out that this construction is lacking in the Chronist's version. Anderson then notes: "It is just possible that beggars (i.e., the blind and lame) were forbidden to enter the Temple (cf. Acts 3:1–10); at least, such disabled people were disqualified from priestly duties (Lev 21:18)." However, Anderson (1989:85) also says that it must be kept in mind that the Temple did not yet exist in the time of David. On the other hand, David was viewed as the "founder of many cultic practices and regulations (cf. 1 Chron 22–28)." See the reaction of Milgrom (1991) and others who oppose this opinion by Douglas in chapter one above, under the heading "hypothesis." Schrage (1972:282–283) argues that the blind were protected by Jewish law and holds that: "The blind were freed from some duties of the ceremonial law and had other privileges as well." Thus, he interprets the "exclusion" of the blind from the cult as part of their "protection" and "advantages". Cf. also Schrage (1972:287, footnote 120) who notes: "Whether the blind and lame had access to the temple (Mt 21:14, not 2 Bα. 5:8 → n. 74) cannot be decided in the absence of a Rabbi".

39 As well as Kysar (1986:148).

b. Babylonian Talmud when before tractates from the Mishnah were added.

Shab. *Shabbat*, Mishnah-, Tosefta-, Talmud tractate *Sabbath* (Strack, *Einl.*, 37).

Taan. *Taanit*, Mishnah-, Tosefta-, Talmud tractate *Fasts* (Strack, *Einl.*, 43).

Nu. r. *Numbers rabba* (*Bemidbar rabba*), Midrash on Numbers (Strack, *Einl.*, 207).

Chag. *Chagiga*, Mishnah-, Tosefta-, Talmud tractate *Feasts* (in relation to pilgrimages) (Strack, *Einl.*, 44).

Nu. r., 4, 20 on 4:16; b.Chag., 16a.) Significant here is the familiar statement of the *ius talionis* that a man is punished where he sins.”

Hence, it was not out of the ordinary for the disciple(s) to have asked Jesus who sinned, seeing as they conformed to contemporary Jewish thought when they made the connection between ‘illness’ and sin. Strack & Billerbeck (1924:529) in confirmation, point to commentary from the *Midrash* and *Talmud* that make a connection between physical deformity (“körperliche Gebrechen”) and sin: “Ganz gelaüfig aber ist den altjüdischen Gelehrten die andre Vorstellung gewesen, dass körperliche Gebrechen der Kinder auf Versündigungen der Eltern zurückzuführen seien” (See also Thyen 2005:456–457; cf. Wengst 2000:366).

God is holy and whole, the God of life (See Köstenberger 2004:30). ‘Illnesses’ and ‘diseases’ are oftentimes linked to ‘impurity’ and ‘brokenness’ (as polar opposites of wholeness). ‘Impurity’, in turn, is connected to sin. As also quoted in the previous chapter, Neyrey (1991:285) remarks: “Those with bodily defects such as the lame, the blind and the deaf are lacking wholeness according to Lev 21:16–20. Lacking bodily wholeness, they lack holiness.”⁴⁰ If someone occupies an impure state, it serves as a ‘sign’ that God has in some sense withdrawn from that person. As was argued above, everything had its place within the Jewish symbolic universe. Whatever was out of place, was unclean. Consequently, sick people and their ailments do not belong in the same ‘sphere’ or ‘space’ as the healthy. That explains why, for example, lepers had to live outside the city walls and yell “Unclean” whenever people came too close. In some sense, it also applied to the lame, the blind, the deaf and the cripple (1991:82).⁴¹ Sick people, like the blind, were socio-religiously pushed to the outer limits of ‘acceptable’ society. Such estranged and marginalised outcasts, usually had to beg in order to survive (Köstenberger 2004:281).⁴²

Neyrey (1991:284) makes the following important comment: “The eye is the ‘lamp of the body’. If the eye is sound, the whole body will be sound; if it is not, the whole body will be filled with darkness.”⁴³ Craffert (1999:97) argues:

40 Neyrey (1991:283) says: “The human body constitutes one of the most important maps, for it is a microcosm of the larger social macrocosm.”

41 In this regard, Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:111) say: “These people without social standing (we could see them as the ‘poorest’) lived just outside the city walls or along the hedgerows of adjacent fields.”

42 Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:111) say: “Such beggars were among the socially expendables, the unclean ‘throwaway’ people who frequented every preindustrial city.”

43 Cf. Luke 11:34–36 and Matthew 6:22–23. Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:170) refer to Aristotle and say: “To be blind was to have eyes from which darkness emanated; darkness was the presence of dark (also ‘stuff’) rather than the absence of light. Blind people were those

“It is God who restores⁴⁴ the health of the faithful and who sends sickness to the unfaithful and disobedient. For the people of the covenant, there is an even more direct link between sickness and ritual impurity.”⁴⁵ Naturally, in some cases, ritual impurity entailed not only socio-religious estrangement and marginalisation, but also distance between the individual and God. Other people judged the individual as to be “out of place” and gave him or her a negative label.⁴⁶ However, when Jesus heals someone, he did it in a holistic manner. The specific illness or disease was cured, but the socio-religious standing of the person was also addressed. He or she received the latent potential to restore the existential potentialities that had been lost and, as a result, receives a second chance in life.

people whose hearts were full of darkness, hence, from whose eyes ‘dark’ emanated. The Blind were often suspected of having the evil eye (Mt 6:22–23).”

- 44 Lindars (1972:341) is of the opinion that this healing act is not presented as a narrative of restoration, but as a “creative act by him who is the light of the World.” (cf. Also Schlatter 1948:222). In my view, this narrative can be understood as a story of restoration in the sense that brokenness is restored. This does not mean that the blind man’s sight was restored to an original state, since the man never before really possessed the ability to see. Nonetheless, as *semeia*, this narrative does illustrate the fact that Jesus, as the giver of life, had the ability to effect restoration. However, I agree with Lindars that this healing narrative could be interpreted as a ‘creative act,’ if by that he means that the healing act should be imbedded in the framework of recreation.
- 45 See Craffert (1999:98). He argues that, in a cultural system where illness was seen as the result of sin, the forgiveness of sin would have been sufficient as an act of socio-religious healing. He rightly points out that the usual requirement for having one’s sin forgiven consisted, among other things, of bringing the sacrifice prescribed for that purpose. This sacrificial system, he says, was monopolised by temple aristocrats or priests and in all probability put enormous pressure on the sick. The sick were the poorest of the poor and would not have been able to afford this. Craffert holds that Jesus rejected the system and granted forgiveness without expecting any additional sacrifice. I do not entirely agree with Craffert’s interpretation. The healing narrative in Mark 1:40–45 explains how Jesus healed the leper, declaring him pure, and then instructed him to show himself to the priest and bring the sacrifices prescribed by Moses. This will be the proof that he was indeed healed and purified. In my view, Jesus did not just perform biological healing, but also healed people socio-religiously, thereby enabling them to be accepted by and taken up into the group-oriented culture of the day. Jesus heals the individual and enables him or her to once again function optimally within the socio-religious system. See the discussion on Mark 1:40–45 above.
- 46 Craffert (1999:98–99) points out the parallel with traditional African cultures. Traditional African communities believe that sickness is the result of disharmony caused by the failure to follow cultural prescriptions, like the honouring of ancestral spirits and so on.

The Spiritual Blindness of the Blind Man

In some sense, sin is radically redefined in John. Carson (1991:361) remarks that: “How it became known that the man was *blind from birth* is not disclosed. Granted, from symbolism of the chapter, it is likely that this detail, in addition to heightening the effect of the miracle, signals that human beings are spiritually blind from birth.”⁴⁷ This obviously corresponds to John’s line of thought. Those who do not believe in Jesus are the ones who have not yet crossed from an existential state of spiritual death to an existential state of spiritual life (cf. 5:24; cf. also 8:21—“καὶ ἐν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ὑμῶν ἀποθανεῖσθε”; cf. Brodie 1993:345). This means that the man is not only blind on a biological level, but by implication also blind on a spiritual level. The reason being that he knows neither Jesus nor the Father (8:19—ἐμὲ οἴδατε οὐτε τὸν πατέρα μου· εἰ ἐμὲ ᾔδειτε, καὶ τὸν πατέρα μου ἂν ᾔδειτε). Köstenberger (2004:281) agrees and notices: “Lacking Light, he also lacks life in the Johannine sense . . .”⁴⁸

In John’s gospel, sin is defined in relation to Jesus. Those who lack faith in Jesus and who are not in a relationship with him, occupy a sinful existential state of spiritual death or blindness. According to John, the physically blind are no longer regarded as sinners, but as objects of God’s grace, through whom God’s glory will shine (9:3—ἀλλ’ ἵνα φανερωθῇ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ). Sinners are depicted in a new way by John. Sinners are those who are ‘spiritually blind’ (9:41; 12:40–41), who are ruled by ‘sin’ (8:21, 24, 34–36) who are under the control of ‘their father, the devil’ (8:44), who trade the truth for the lie (8:44) and who are therefore not children of God (8:47). According to John, it is these spiritually blind people who are in dire need of ‘healing’. In particular, it is these individuals who have lost the potential for existentially living a ‘spiritual life’ within the sphere of God’s spiritual family. John emphasizes that only Jesus can heal faithlessness or spiritual blindness, because he alone is the true source of ‘light’ and life. He alone has the distinct ability to transform spiritual darkness. Hence, the true healing act of Jesus is his restoration of humanity’s faithlessness, a restoration of their spiritual blindness. At its deepest level, the ‘healing’ acts of Jesus represent ‘spiritual healing’. When Jesus heals, and when he restores sight to the spiritually blind, he creates for them the possibility to experience a new life potential within God’s family. Jesus restores humanity from an existential state of spiritual immobility, to an existential state of spiritual vitality and thereby opening to them the possibility to truly rise to a new life.

47 See Hendriksen (1976:72).

48 See Brodie (1993:345).

The latter statement is important and very relevant to the discussion of sin in chapter 9. In the present discussion, it will become clear exactly how the healed man and the Jews judged the healing act of Jesus according to their interpretation of the law. The Jews labelled Jesus as a sinner (9:24). However, John defines sin differently. In John's mind, sin is relative to Jesus. Those who do not believe in him are caught up in a sinful state of being characterised by spiritual blindness and death (5:24). In the context of Jesus' miraculous healing of the blind man, John voices arguments to prove that Jesus does indeed come from God (9:25, 27, 30–32).⁴⁹ Jesus creates new life with new existential possibilities for man. The Jews, on the other hand, betray a lack of insight when they fail to comprehend this life-creating act of Jesus. Their conduct—calling the healed man a sinner and casting him out—makes this crystal clear (9:34).

This whole discourse takes place against the backdrop of the UDN—specifically, of an individual's relationship with God: In 9:3, we read that the man was born blind⁵⁰ so that the works of God could be seen in him (ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῇ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ). Jesus claims to be doing the work of God, who sent him (9:4–5).

The Jews' counterargument in this context is simply to deny the existence of any relationship between Jesus and God (9:24). Conversely, as a result of Jesus' conduct, the relationship between Jesus and God is defended by the blind man (9:25, 30–32). Van der Watt (2000a:79) says that sin is here defined in terms of the position someone occupies in relation to God. Jesus stands on the side of God. If a person does not accept him, he or she does not stand on God's side and is in effect leading a sinful existence.⁵¹

In forensic terms, even the modern reader is caught up in the midst of this legal struggle, since a choice has to be made on which side of the line one stands. In a certain sense, then, one can say that Jesus, as opposed to the law, becomes the focal point from whence sin and judgment is defined (Van der Watt 2000a:79).

The incarnation of Jesus was the defining moment upon which the cosmic dualism was clearly and irreversibly revealed. The coming of Jesus redefined the entire understanding of what sin is. Whoever does not accept the Son will die in sin.

49 Van der Watt (2000a:80) notices that the implicit reader knows that Jesus has been declared righteous (16:10) and that He is without sin (7:18; 8:46). This creates irony.

50 See Allison (1997:83–102).

51 Such people remain in sin and have no excuse (15:22). Also see, in this regard, 9:41; 15:22–24; 16:8; 19:11.

Jesus becomes the yardstick against which humanity measures itself. The law is still obeyed, but now solely because it testifies and points to Jesus (5:39–40).⁵²

John 9:3–5

3 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς, Οὐτε οὗτος ἥμαρτεν οὔτε οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ’ ἵνα φανερωθῇ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ. 4 ἡμᾶς⁵³ δεῖ ἐργάζεσθαι τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντός με ἕως ἡμέρα ἐστίν· ἔρχεται νῦν ὅτε οὐδεὶς δύναται ἐργάζεσθαι. 5 ὅταν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ᾧ, φῶς εἰμι τοῦ κόσμου.⁵⁴

Jesus unambiguously states that the cause of this man’s blindness is not to be found in the sins of either the man or his parents⁵⁵ (Thyen 2005:457; Newman and Nida 1980:299).⁵⁶ The “ἵνα”—construction leads to the purpose or result of

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- 52 See Loader (2002:432–483) for a discussion on Jesus’ interpretation of the law in John. According to him, Jesus sees the law as a testimony, ultimately directing towards his coming, which is now being realised. John views the law as a gift of grace (χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος) with divine origins (cf. the passive ἐδόθη in 1:17). Unlike the Samaritans, the Johannine Jesus does not view the law as another set of religious traditions. Salvation does not lie outside the law (4:22). Jesus is the fulfilment of the law.
- 53 Beasley-Murray (1987: *ad loc*) points to the results of text-critical research: “ἡμᾶς (δεῖ) is better attested than ἐμέ and was more likely to be altered than vice versa. By contrast πέμψαντός ἡμᾶς instead of πέμψαντός με appears to be due to assimilation to ἡμᾶς δεῖ.” Hendriksen (1978:73) holds on to the plural ‘we’ and argues that “the textual evidence furnishes no adequate reason to depart from this reading.” Barrett (1978:357) recalls Martyn, who argues that it points to the “continuation of Jesus’ works . . . in the deeds of Christian witnesses.” Brown (1966:372) recalls Bultmann, who prefers the ‘we’ translation and holds that the current construction was introduced by the Christian community.
- 54 Translation (KJV): “³Jesus answered, neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. ⁴ I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”
- 55 Thyen (2005:457) notes: “Jesus aber lässt sich auf diese Frage der theoretischen Vernunft nach der αἰτία der Blindheit des Mannes nicht ein, sondern redet allein von deren τέλος in der göttlichen Heilsökonomie . . .” In other words, the disciples enquired as to the *reason* or *cause* of the man’s blindness, but Jesus answered them by explaining its *purpose* or *goal* (cf. Brown 1966:371).
- 56 There are many Old Testament and Second-Temple texts that not necessarily relate illness to sin (cf. Jr 31:29–30; Ezk 18; cf. also Tobit 3:3) (Köstenberger 2004:181).

the illness:⁵⁷ The man was born blind *so that* (ἵνα) the works of God (τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ) could be revealed or made visible (φανερωθῇ)⁵⁸ in him (ἐν αὐτῷ) (Carson 1991:362).⁵⁹ The man's blindness was actually an ideal opportunity for Jesus to utilise in order to illustrate God's power (Köstenberger 2004:281).⁶⁰

As was already argued earlier on in this book, it is God who reveals his works (5:20—ἔργον)⁶¹ to and through Jesus. Whatever Jesus does (ποιέω), he has learnt from the Father (8:28). As we saw, these works are defined in 5:21 as *inter alia* the giving of life (Morris 1995:426). In both contexts where healing is on the table (5:17 and 9:3–4), the healing acts are described as 'works' (ἔργα / ἐργάζεται). This constitutes the background of the declaration that the Father is in the Son and performs his works through him (14:10–11). The Father shows the Son his works and teaches him in this way. Jesus then duplicates what he saw his Father do (cf. 5:19vv.). Subsequently, the works Jesus performed are indeed the works of God in action.⁶² The works that Jesus did are indicative of the unique unity between the Father and the Son (See Köstenberger 2004:430–431).⁶³ Yet, Jesus is still dependant on the Father.⁶⁴ In 4:34, Jesus metaphorically states that to do (ποιέω) the will (θέλημα) of his Father, who sent him, and to fulfill (τελειώσω) his works (αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον), is his food (βρώμα) (Schnackenburg 1990.1.445).⁶⁵

57 Newman and Nida (1980:299) make the important comment that there is a slight difference in meaning between ἵνα as a construct of purpose and ἵνα as a construct of result. They explain it as such: "If this present clause indicates result, the meaning is that this man's blindness offered an occasion for the power of God to be revealed. But, if this clause indicates purpose, it means that he was born blind so that Jesus could heal him of his blindness and so reveal the power of God at work."

58 Verb: Aorist, Subjunctive Passive of φανερώω.

59 Carson (1991:362) says: "In this instance, he insists that *neither this man nor his parents sinned*. Rather, *this happened so that the work* [lit. 'works'] *of God might be displayed in his life*."

60 See Carson (1991:362).

61 See, for example, 3:21; 5:20, 36; 6:28; 7:3, 21; 10:25, 37.

62 John 14:10–11:10 οὐ πιστεύεις ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐστίν; τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἐγὼ λέγω ὑμῖν ἅπ' ἐμαυτοῦ οὐ λαλῶ, ὁ δὲ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένων ποιεῖ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ. 11 πιστεύετε μοι ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοί· εἰ δὲ μή, διὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτὰ πιστεύετε. Translation (KJV):
¹⁰ Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. ¹¹ Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

63 See Jn 10:25, 32, 37, 38; 14:11; 15:24; See also 3:21.

64 De Jonge (1978:49).

65 Barrett (1978:357) says: "Here the works of God are 'the works God wills me to do'. The same words are used in a different sense at 6:28." In John, the term δεῖ indicates 'divine

Agent of Transformation: Jesus and the Disciples do the Works of God as Sender

To do God's work is naturally and inextricably linked to God's sending of Jesus. Van der Watt (2000a) sensitises us for the implication of the Son's 'mission': The mission of Jesus correlates to ancient conventions with regard to the sending of an agent by a sender.⁶⁶ As the agent who was sent, the Son represents the Father. He *duplicates* the works he saw and learnt from God. That is why Jesus says: "... δεῖ ἐργάζεσθαι τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντός⁶⁷ με." (Jn 9:4). More than anything else, Jesus does the work of the One who sent Him. Since the theme of the Son's mission has already been discussed, we will presently restrict ourselves to only a few comments on the subject. The following elements are present in the mission motif:⁶⁸

- The Son is the *agent* who was sent
- The Son is sent by the Father who is the primary *Sender*⁶⁹
- The *primary motive* of the Father is *love* (3:16)
- The *primary result* is that people must receive *life* (3:16; 20:30–31).⁷⁰
- The Father *reveals* his works to the Son (5:19vv.)

necessity' (cf. 3:14; 4:4; 10:16; 12:34). In this passage, it implies that whatever has to be done, has to be done in spite of opposition (Köstenberger 2004:282).

66 Van der Watt (2000a: *ad loc*) maintains that the element of mission that occurs in the Gospel originates from the social conventions of the ancient world (Jewish practices as well as elements of Greco-Roman practice). Bühner (1977); Borgen (1986); Miranda (1977) discuss these Greco-Roman mission practices. Witherington (1995:140–141) discusses the concept of agency in the Gospel according to John. He believes that the concept of agency can be summarised in one sentence: "A person's agent is himself" (1995:140): "The agent receives full authority to perform certain tasks or deliver certain messages on the behalf of the sender; The agent must be received and treated like the sender would have been; A transgression against the agent was seen as a transgression against the sender himself. Similarly, positive treatment of the agent was viewed as positive treatment of the sender himself".

67 Verb: Aorist, Participle, Active, Genitive, Masculine Singular of πέμπω.

68 Van der Watt (2000a:20) notes: "Agency in John most probably refers to the Old Testament practice of sending a prophet. The ordinary secular practice of sending someone actually shares the same characteristics."

69 See Borgen (1986:67–78). Compare Jn 5:24, 37–38; 8:18, 42; 12:49; 14:24.

70 This "life" is not only defined as the potentialities of biological and socio-religious existence, but also, in particular, as potentialities of quantitative and qualitative (Jn 10:10) eschatological existence within God's family.

According to Ridderbos (1997:333), Jesus involves the disciples in these works.⁷¹ This view corresponds to that of Van der Watt (2000a:153), who reasons that not only is the Father teaching the Son, but the disciples are also going through a certain educational process:⁷²

- God is the primary Sender and Jesus the agent (3:16)
- God displays his works to Jesus (5:19vv.)
- Jesus, in turn, teaches the disciples:
 - Jesus instructs the disciples in chapters 13–16 about their identity: Who they are, as well as who they’re supposed to be; What they can expect from the Father and his Son; What exactly this new life within God’s family involves; What the future holds, etc.
- Like Jesus saw and heard the works of the Father (5:19vv.), so the disciples see and hear the works of Jesus (15:27), and they are summoned to do the same.⁷³

Van der Watt (2000a: 150) says: “The actions and the will of God, the Father, determine the character and life style of the children of God. Jesus serves as ‘revealer’ of the will of God, which means that his example should be followed if a person wants to be obedient to God.” The family of God is a unit that can be measured by their corporate conduct. Certain values are lived out by God’s family—a lifestyle that separates them from Satan’s family. Hence, the family of God does the works of God the way they saw Jesus do them.⁷⁴

71 Ridderbos (1997:333) says: The obligation to do these works is extended to Jesus’ disciples. It is not just a necessity laid on them as a task; it is also the “necessity” of the divine plan of redemption in which they have been taken up.” See 4:34; 5:17; 10:32. Barrett (1978:357) points to Martyn, who argues that it indicates the ‘continuation of Jesus’ works . . . in the deeds of Christian witnesses.’

72 Broad strokes of the teaching process are painted here. For a thorough discussion of the process, see Van der Watt (2000a:153vv.).

73 Barrett (1978:357) says: “As the Father has sent him so he sends them (20:21) . . .”

74 In an extensive quotation worth mentioning, Van der Watt (2000a:150) propounds that: “On the question of the example being set, John is quite descriptive about God, Jesus and the Spirit. The basic and determinative characteristics of the family of God are reflected in what is thus said of God, Jesus and the Spirit. As has been mentioned, in ancient families these characteristics were supposed to be reflected in the life and actions of the believers. As children of God, the believers ought to live and act in a similar way. The union is not ontological or mystic. In the light of the family imagery the *Immanenzformeln* basically points to a qualitative and functional union on the basis of shared status, conviction and custom as members of the same family. One thinks and acts as the other, because of what

Jesus is the 'Light' of the World

Jesus says in John 9:4: “ἔως ἡμέρα ἐστίν· ἔρχεται νύξ ὅτε οὐδεὶς δύναται ἐργάζεσθαι.” Here, Jesus associates his disciples with his work, as well as with his present and future mission (Beasley-Murray 1987:155).⁷⁵ Barrett (1978:357) argues that, just like the Father sent the Son, the Son also sends the disciples. According to him, the disciples are obliged to carry out the works of God while the opportunity is there. Since one cannot see in the dark, one cannot work at night. Right now, however, it is daytime and the disciples can see the One sent by the Father (Köstenberger 2004:282). They can also see the Son's works. But there comes a time when Jesus will no longer be on earth. When that time comes, it will be as dark as night, since the Son and his works will be invisible. According to Ridderbos (1997:334), this passage displays something of the urgency of the matter, in that Jesus' time on earth is coming to an end, and that the works of God should enjoy priority.⁷⁶ Jesus says that, as long as he is still in the world, he is the 'light' of the world: “ὅταν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ᾧ, φῶς εἰμι τοῦ κόσμου” (Jn 9:5). 'light' and 'life' are connected to one another in the Gospel. Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:170) says: “Light is also associated with life. When Jesus is saying he is the 'light of the world,' he is saying both that he enables Israel to see the ways things really are, and that he is likewise the source of Israel's life.”⁷⁷ In other words, Jesus says that while he, as the 'light' of the world, is still here on earth, the source of life is visible and close to humanity, and that they must grab hold of it.

is shared as members of the same family. For instance, to abide in love means to act and think according to the principles of love as devised by God (who is love) and revealed through Jesus. In other words, it can be said that the Father stays in the Son because the Son expresses the corporate will of the family in thought and deed as an honourable member of that family. That is why John says that whoever knows Jesus, knows the Father. Jesus actually duplicates the Father in his actions and gives the life the Father gives.”

75 Barrett (1978:357) agrees and remarks that: “This, the more difficult reading, corresponds to other passages (notably 3:11) where Jesus associates with himself the apostolic community which he has gathered about him.”

76 Ridderbos (1997:334) says: “What puts pressure on Jesus and his disciples is that they have to realize that *his* available time is limited (cf. vs. 5; 12:35). All the events narrated here and in the following chapters are under pressure from his approaching end.” See Beasley-Murray (1987:155) for a similar stance.

77 Cf. Loader (2002:468), who rightly notices that Jesus is the fulfilment of the law and the Jewish feasts: “Rather, he has Jesus claim to offer in truth what the feast could only symbolise at a material level.”

EXCURSUS: The meaning of Light

Light' in Old and New Testaments

The image of 'light'⁷⁸ occurs *circa* two hundred times in the Bible. It is one of the Bible's most complex and wide-ranging symbols and plays a theological role throughout. 'Light' plays a prominent role in the first (Gn 1:3–4) and last chapters of the Bible (Rv 22:5). Shirkbroun in Green et al. (1992: *ad loc*) argue: "The use of 'light' in the Gospels follows, on the whole, the use of 'light' in the OT and late Hellenistic Judaism."⁷⁹

Many ancient religions believed that the gods lived in a bright world that was filled with 'light' (Brown 1976:490). That is why 'light' is associated with God and his presence.

During the earth's *Creation*, God brought forth new life from chaos and darkness.⁸⁰ Light is the very first thing that is created by God (Gen 1:3–4).⁸¹ There is only one God with the name Yahweh, who created both the light and the darkness, and He is the ruler over darkness.⁸² From the very beginning, the Bible links 'light' with life (Ryken 2000: *ad loc*), and it maintains this association of 'light' with life throughout. 'Light' brings about life and is in this way mostly connected to life.⁸³

The Mediterranean person of Biblical times was someone who cohabited with the intimate rhythms of the cycles of nature.⁸⁴ Work was carried out during the day and resting was done at night time. As time passed, symbolic meaning was attached to the beginning and to the end of daytime, as well as to the connection between daytime and light.

78 See Philo in *Abr. 156–164*. In *Abr. 164*, Philo argues that wisdom and philosophy originate from human sight (eyes). According to Runia (1986:272), Philo opined that: "Sight brings the understanding into action."

79 Shirkbroun in Green, McKnight, & Marshall (1992:472).

80 Ryken et al. (2000: *ad loc*) strikingly say: "Here is the wonder of existence springing from nonexistence, breathtaking in its suddenness and illuminating power."

81 Von Rad (1963:49) (*in Genesis*) calls it "the firstborn of creation".

82 Brown (1976:491).

83 Ryken et al. (2000: *ad loc*) remark: "Light in the Bible is first of all physical, the very basis of life on the earth. This primacy of light to life itself is signaled in the Bible by the fact that God's creation of light is the first recorded event."

84 Kittel (1995: *ad loc*) says: "God has created the world. Is 45:7 associates cosmology and soteriology by linking light and darkness with salvation and perdition. Genesis 1 refers to creation of the word and distinguishes light from light-bearers as God first creates light and then the sun, moon, and stars to carry it, and to establish the rhythm of day and night."

Sunrise brings 'light' and marks the beginning of a new day with novel activities. Universally speaking, sunrise is also seen as a time when the activities of the previous night are revealed.

Biblical thought wrestles with a *constant conflict between 'light' and 'darkness' for domination*. Reality is divided into a dichotomy. Ryken et al. (2000: *ad loc*; section on 'light') say: "Primitive thinking begins by dividing reality into a dichotomy between 'light' and darkness, viewed as combatants in a perpetual battle for dominance. When 'light' dawns, chaos is again averted." However, it is important to note that 'light' is the dominant party/force in this conflicting situation. The Gospel according to John also makes it clear that the 'darkness' was not able to put out the 'light' (Jn 1:5). Nevertheless, the absence of 'light' causes the domination of the 'darkness' with resulting chaos (Job 12:25; Is 5:30; Mt 6:22–23).

Light also has strong symbolic associations in the Bible. 'Light' comes forth from a specific source. God as Creator is the source of Light. 'Light' is associated with life and salvation.⁸⁵ God is also the source of life. Darkness, in turn, is associated with death (Job 33:30).

Light is also associated with holiness. Evil persons are children of the devil and their lives are lived in darkness. As a result, they don't come to the light, since it threatens to expose their wickedness and unrighteousness (Jn 3:20).

Light is associated with truth and wisdom.⁸⁶ The word of God gives light, allows understanding and leads people on to the right track (Ps 119:130; 43:3). The Bible understands truth as the revelation of God. Such revelation is presented as light: "Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet and a 'light' unto my path" (Ps 119:105). God's law is also described as something that brightens one's eyes (Ps 19:8). In John, Jesus is the agent of God the Sender. Jesus comes from "above" and knows the Father. The Father shows Jesus his works and Jesus, portrayed as the ideal agent, duplicates that which he saw the Father do. As such, Jesus is in the ideal position to reveal the Father. Jesus' teachings (as 'light' of the world) reveals the truth and his works bring life.⁸⁷

85 See Brown (1976:491).

86 Kittel (1995: *ad loc*) says: "Wisdom is compared to light (Ec 2:13)."

87 Kittel et al. (1995: *ad loc*) say: "Light is the brightness of the world, salvation, and wisdom. God causes his light to shine, or gives light, through wisdom or the law. Salvation is now more individual, and there is a sharper duality as the light of the law comes into contrast with the darkness of Adam."

Light symbolises God (Is 60:19, 20) and the Messiah. 1 John 1:5 puts it beyond doubt: "God is light, and in him is no 'darkness' at all." 'Light' also symbolises the Messiah. Isaiah 9:1–2 says: "*Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in 'darkness' have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.*" In Matthew 4:15–16 Jesus applies this prophecy to himself. In John 8:12 and 9:5 Jesus calls himself the 'Light of the world' (See also Jn 1:4, 5, 7, 8, 9) 'light' of the world and declares in John 12:35–36a: "*35 Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. 36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.*"

Light symbolises new life within the faith community. If God and his Son are associated with 'light' and life, 'light' is also connected to salvation and new life. Jesus says in John 3:21 (KJV): "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." In John 8:12 Jesus also says: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."⁸⁸ (Ryken et al. 2000:512).

1 John 1:7 describes life in God's family: "⁵ *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*"

*Light in the Gospel according to John*⁸⁹

Conzelmann in Kittel (1985 [c1964], vol. 9: *ad loc* 310–358) says: "[T]he OT alone hardly seems adequate to explain the use of light and darkness by John. . . ." John's depiction and utilisation of the concept of 'light' is picturesque in nature. With picturesque it is meant that 'light' has to do with other theological concepts like life, sin, darkness, salvation, revelation, the mission of Jesus, the doing of 'works', an existential state people could

88 Ryken, Wilhoit, Longman, Duriez, Penney, & Reid, (2000, c1998: *ad loc* 512).

89 The word Light (φῶς) appears 72 times in the NT, 33 of which appear in Johannine texts.

occupy, family terms, etc. A whole series of relational theological concepts are evoked when the theme of 'light' is put onto the table.⁹⁰

Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Light

In 14:6, Jesus calls himself the way, the truth and the light. The concepts of 'light' and life function prominently within the gospel's dualistic thought pattern. 'Light' stands antithetically over against 'darkness' (1:5; 3:19) and 'truth' over against 'deceit' (8:44) and 'life' over against 'death'. When Jesus claims in 9:5 that he is the 'light' light of the world, it has to be understood within a 'dualistic' context: 'light' against darkness; life against death (5:24), truth against deceit, 'heavenly' against 'earthly' (3:6; 4:24; 6:63; 8:23; 16:27–28;), 'above' against 'below' (3:31; 8:23; 19:11).

According to Shirbroun in Green et al. (1992: *ad loc* 1735), 'light' is one of the primary symbols in the fourth Gospel. Already in the prologue, λόγος (Word), life (ζωή) and 'light' (φῶς) are linked to each other.⁹¹ The Logos (Jesus) who had become flesh is the life and the 'light' for humanity (1:4) and wherever this type of 'light' is to be found, life is also present (Culpepper 1983:190).⁹²

Van der Watt (2000a:19) also points out that already in the prologue (1:4) as well as at various other places (8:12) a direct link is drawn between 'light' and life. This all forms part of, and occur within the context of, the family metaphor. When there is being spoken in terms of the family metaphor, it is particularly

90 In line with Ryken et al. (2000: *ad loc* 512), Green et al. (1992: *ad loc*) note: "Light is pressed into service to express various other aspects of Johannine theology: revelation, sin, faith, judgment and ethics. This darkness is of two kinds: that which prevails before the light comes (1:5; 8:12; 12:46) and that which descends on those who have refused the light and have chosen to live in darkness (3:19–20). This expresses the Johannine understanding of sin." Light removes darkness and reveals God's salvation plan (1:5; 3:19; 8:12; 12:35, 46).

91 Green et al. (1992: *ad loc*) say: "The prologue links logos [word], life, and light so powerfully that the Group dominates the symbolic system of the entire narrative." Bultmann (1971:42) sees a link between sin and the image of darkness, on the one hand, and salvation and the redemption from sin as an image of light, on the other. Brown (1976:490) says: "Light possesses powers essential to true life." Elsewhere, Brown also notes that light and life are already linked in the prologue (1976:495).

92 In the Old Testament, walking in the light refers to faithfully obeying the law. Brown (1976:493) says: "He who walks in the light himself can also become a light for others, i.e. a mediator of the covenant on behalf of all mankind." In Is 42:6; 49:6; 58:10, the same is said of the servant of Yahweh. He continues to say: "This missionary outlook is marked by a world-wide hope, even in the OT, for the truth of Yahweh will go forth as "a light to the nations (Is 51:4), and they will flock to the light of God (Is 60:3)."

about birth (John 3) and filiation and a resulting existential state with life possibilities within a certain family. The children of God know the Father and the Son. In this way 'light' can be related to revelation. Children of God found the revelation of God through Jesus and therefore know the Father and the Son. They no longer walk in darkness, but in light, as children of the 'light' (12:26).⁹³ Children of God are children of the 'light' and children of the devil are children of darkness. As children of darkness, unbelievers are unable to see the truth. They remain caught up in their blindness and in a deadly state of existence.

Johannine ethics⁹⁴ are expressed by these family terms and are specifically linked to "walking in the light" (8:12; 12:35), which points to the keeping of Jesus' love commandment. Those who believe in the 'light' see who Jesus really is and become part of God's family and walk in the 'light' (12:36, 46). Those who do not believe in the 'light' can be identified by their deeds, which are why they are judged and separated from the children of the 'light' (3:19–21). 'Light' and 'darkness' function as indicators of human character, as illustrated with Nicodemus (3:20), the Jews (9:40; 11:10) and Judas (13:30).⁹⁵

Shirbroun in Green et al.⁹⁶ (1992: *ad loc* 1735) believes that John's theology of 'light' can be better understood against the background of the debate between Jesus and the Jews concerning the identity and meaning of Jesus. According to Shirbroun, John appropriated the symbol of 'light' from Judaism, where it referred to the presence and salvation of God, as well as to the law, wisdom and the Logos (cf. Philo). In this way John attempted to describe the

93 Bultmann (1971:40) says: "By making the world bright, it makes it possible for men to see. But sight is not only significant in that it enables man to orientate himself in respect to objects; sight is at the same time the means whereby man understands himself in his world, the reason he does not 'grope in the dark', but sees his 'way'." Brown (1976:494) joins in and argues that it is not enough to simply know and see the way. This indicative calls for an imperative, i.e. to become children of the Light and as a result goes over into action (John 12:36).

94 Brown (1976:490) points out that, since the earliest of times, light has been associated with ethically good deeds and darkness or night with morally bad deeds. He says: "... Misdeeds are said to take place in darkness. Hence it is the task, e.g., of a judge, to bring hidden things 'to light'."

95 See Culpepper (1983:192). Conzelmann (1976:350) says: "Herein lies the basic distinction between Jn.'s Gospel and Gnosticism". In other words, there is no metaphysical or cosmological speculation about light. The concrete ethical implications thereof determine the believer's existence.

96 See the entrance on 'light' in Green (1992: *ad loc*).

person and works of Jesus as the fulfilment of Jewish expectations (8:12vv.; 9:5) within the context of the Feast of Tabernacles.

It is only in John where Jesus exclusively refers to himself as the 'Light of the world' (8:12; 9:5; 12:35–36, 46). John the Baptist is not the light, but testifies about the 'light' (1:7–8; 5:35). God (through Jesus) is the source of 'light' and, hence, everyone must receive the 'light' from Jesus (1:9; 8:12) so that they can become children of the 'light' (12:36).

The statement by Jesus that he is the 'light' of the world must be understood against the background of his declaration in 8:12. Thus, the declaration of 8:12 is taken up again in 9:5. In some sense, then, the court case still continues.⁹⁷ *Filiation* is a central motif in chapter 8.⁹⁸ In ancient times, a person's conduct was directly linked to his identity and origin. What you do declares who you are (Malina et al. 1995: *ad loc*).⁹⁹ The underlying argument is that one's conduct exposes one's identity (in other words, who your father is). The Jews' lying and murderous conduct shows that they are children of the father of deceit and murder (8:44). That is why they do not accept Jesus. They also fail to understand that he was before Abraham. They also fail to see Jesus from the perspective of the greater narrative about God. Therefore they are blind and, as a result, slaves of sin.¹⁰⁰

According to Bultmann (1971:53), Jesus is the only true, authentic 'light' with the ability to offer the kind of revelation that leads to true knowledge.¹⁰¹

Beasley-Murray (1987:155) holds that the miracle after this declaration is a sign that Jesus is the 'light' not only for the Jews, but for all of humankind.

97 In this regard, see Lincoln (2000:96–105) for an analysis of John 9 against the background of ancient court cases.

98 In order to correctly understand childhood in John, it is necessary to read chapter 9 in conjunction with chapter 3. Chapter 3 is about rebirth. The concept of birth recalls the family metaphors.

99 See Kok & Van Eck (eds. 2011: *ad loc*) as well as Malina, Joubert, and Van der Watt (1995: *ad loc*).

100 Within the context of the Gospel as a whole, chapter 8 is central—it describes how the spiritual and visible worlds flow together. By accepting Jesus, your eyes open up to see the spiritual reality of God that came via Jesus. If Jesus is accepted, eyes are opened for that reality. However, if your eyes do not open, you remain in darkness. This means that you remain a slave to sin and, as a result, remain captive under the devil's rule. In other words, unbelievers are not only blind to God's spiritual reality, but also occupy a deadly state of being. See Van der Watt (2000a:34).

101 Bultmann (1971:53) says: "He is the *proper, authentic* light, who alone can fulfil the claim to give existence the proper understanding of itself."

(We have already pointed out above, that ‘light’ and life are connected.) As the Light, Jesus also creates new life and life possibilities within the family of God.

John 9:6–7

6 ταῦτα εἰπὼν ἔπτυσεν χαμαὶ καὶ ἐποίησεν πηλὸν ἐκ τοῦ πτύσματος καὶ ἐπέχρισεν αὐτοῦ τὸν πηλὸν ἐπὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς 7 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, "Ὑπαγε νίψαι εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν τοῦ Σιλωάμ (ὃ ἐρμηνεύεται Ἀπεσταλμένος). ἀπῆλθεν οὖν καὶ ἐνίψατο καὶ ἦλθεν βλέπων.¹⁰²

Transformational Interaction: Restoration of the Crisis Situation

Directly after Jesus’ declaration that he is the ‘light’ of the world, he spat¹⁰³ (ἔπτυσεν)¹⁰⁴ on the ground (χαμαί), made clay¹⁰⁵ (ἐποίησεν¹⁰⁶ πηλὸν) and rubbed (ἐπέχρισεν)¹⁰⁷ it on the blind man’s eyes (τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς).¹⁰⁸ He then told the man to go ("Ὑπαγε)¹⁰⁹ wash (νίψαι)¹¹⁰ himself in the pool (εἰς τὴν

102 Translation (NIV): ⁶ Having said this, he spat on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. ⁷ “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

103 According to Ridderbos (1997:335), saliva was seen as a therapeutic substance: “The application of saliva to blind eyes was considered curative (cf. Mk 8:23; 7:33), though the texts cited for this do not mention the mixing of saliva and earth.” Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:170) refer to the work of Pliny (*Natural History* 27.75; 28.5, 48, 61, 77; 29.12, 32; 32.29), who mentions that spit has therapeutic attributes. It also protected people from the so-called evil eye (cf. Mk 7:33; 8:23). See Craffert (1999:102–103) for a discussion on ancient healing practices. He points out that many miracle-healers made use of spit as a therapeutic remedy. Craffert (1999:102–109) convincingly shows that the healing practices of Jesus was not unique. The therapeutic action steps of Jesus, like the application of spit, the laying on of hands, the use of miraculous words like “ephphatha” and his exorcisms, all agreed with the customary practices of the day.

104 Verb: Aorist, Indicative, Active of πτύω.

105 Beasley-Murray (1987:155) recalls the early church fathers, who argued that the making of clay was a direct reference to the creation of man in Gn 2:7. Irenaeus says: “That which the artificer—the Word—had omitted to form in the womb he supplied in public, that the works of God might be manifested in him (*Adv. Haer.* 15.2).”

106 Verb: Aorist, Indicative, Active of ποιέω.

107 Verb: Aorist, Indicative, Active of ἐπιχρίω.

108 Cf. Mark 7:33 and 8:23.

109 Verb: Present, Imperative, Active of ὑπάγω.

110 Verb: Aorist, Imperative, Middle of νίπτω.

κολυμβήθραν) of Siloam¹¹¹ (τοῦ Σιλωάμ). In the context of the Tabernacle festival, the pool of Siloam played a very important role since that was the place from where the water to be used in the Tabernacle rituals were sourced (cf. *m. Sukkah* 4.9–10). The man went (ἀπῆλθεν)¹¹² in obedience¹¹³ and washed (ἐνίψατο)¹¹⁴ himself. With this act of faith a divine interaction of transformation, a miracle, occurred.¹¹⁵ The man received restoration or recreation of his sight (ἦλθεν¹¹⁶ βλέπων¹¹⁷).¹¹⁸

The Words of Jesus Create Life

It was noted above that from the reader's viewpoint, the word ἔργα has, up to this point in the gospel, been closely related to the term σημεῖα (cf. Salier 2004:111–112). In 9:16, the current act of healing is explicitly placed within the framework of the σημεῖα. This is achieved against the background of Jesus' statement that he must do the works (τὰ ἔργα) of the one (God) who sent him (ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντός με) while it is still day (cf. 9:4—ἡμᾶς δεῖ ἐργάζεσθαι τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντός με ἕως ἡμέρας ἑστίν· ἔρχεται νύξ ὅτε οὐδεὶς δύναται ἐργάζεσθαι).

In our discussion on the previous healing acts, we argued that the works of God (ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντός με) has, up to now, been related to recreation from

111 According to Newman and Nida (1980:301), water was taken from the pool of Siloam for the ceremonies held during the Feast of Tabernacles (Feast of Shelters). The pool was located within the walls of Jerusalem, on the southern side of the city's eastern hill. It was also near where the Kidron and Tyropean valleys met. The Hebrew meaning of Siloam is 'to send' or 'sent out'

112 Verb: Aorist, Indicative, Active of ἀπέρχομαι.

113 Barrett (1978:359) is correct when he states: "The man's obedience was complete, and so was his cure."

114 Verb: Aorist, Indicative Middle of νίπτω.

115 Ridderbos (1997:335) believes that it is Jesus who takes the initiative in the healing act. The text gives no indication of former contact between Jesus and the blind man. In his view, it is also not clear why Jesus had to send the man to the pool of Siloam and why healing only occurs after he physically washed his face with its water. According to him, it could possibly be seen as "an indicative of an initiative on the part of Jesus to arouse faith in the blind man (cf. v. 35)."

116 Verb: Aorist Indicative Active of ἔρχομαι.

117 Verb: Present, Participle, Active, Nominative, Masculine and Singular of βλέπω.

118 Newman and Nida (1980:302) make the important comment that the translation "came" (ἦλθεν) could give the impression that the man returned to Jesus. They do not believe this to have been the case. The text gives the impression that the man immediately returned home, since it was his neighbours who saw him first. In this literary context, Jesus only re-establishes contact with the man for the first time in 9:35. As such, Newman and Nida (1980:302) propose the following translation: "and went back home, being able to see".

existential situations associated with 'death' and the loss of life potentialities. The question is whether or not that connection also applies in the present situation?

In the first place, we will have to argue that we are presently dealing with an existential situation indicative of 'death'; and in the second place, it will have to be illustrated that Jesus created life out of this existential situation.

Blindness as an Associative Category of Death

That the Jewish thought paradigm held a strong cause and effect relation between sin and blindness is undisputable and was already discussed in detail (cf. Strack and Billerbeck 1924:529; See Lv 26:26; Dt 28:28–29; 28:6; Zph 1:17; 12:4; Job 11:20; 17:5; 21:17).

The current discussion will focus on the ancient Mediterranean experience and view of blindness as a categorically negative existential reality. Salier (2004:115) paints a picture of how ancient people viewed blindness—a picture that might assist us in illustrating something of the 'deadly' existential situation and the loss of existential possibilities blindness entailed. This will be utilised to place the healing act as life-giving *σημεία* against a more nuanced relief:

The blind were usually considered to be unfortunate, helpless and worthless (Philo, *Ebr.* 155–6; *Fug.* 123; *Mos.* 1.123–26). They could go nowhere and were almost helpless without a guide to lead and help them (Sophocles, *Ant.* 989; Apuleius, *Metam.* 8.12). They cannot protect themselves and require the protection of others (Job 29.15). The blind and the lame were almost proverbially related to ineffectual weakness and dependency (2 Sam 5.6; Jer 31.8). They are likely to be beggars (Diogenes Laertius, *Vita* 6.56), *as good as living corpses* (Philo, *Spec.* 4.202),¹¹⁹ driven to despair and suicide (Philo, *Sobr.* 4; *Virt.* 11.1).¹²⁰

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119 Philo notes in *Spec.* 4.202: "It seems to me that these men would not spare even the dead, in the extravagance of their cruelty, but, according to the proverb so commonly quoted, would even slay the slain over again, since they in a manner think fit to insult and ill treat those members of them which are already dead; for eyes which do not see are dead, and ears which are devoid of the power of hearing are devoid of life; so that if the man himself to whom these members belong, were to be extinct, they would then show their merciless and implacable nature, doing no humane or compassionate action, such as is shown to the dead, even by their enemies in irreconcilable wars. And this may be enough to say on this subject." (Philo & Yonge 1996, c1993: *ad loc.*)

120 In *Virt.* 11–12, Philo notes: "But the number of such men is small, for virtue is not a thing frequently met with in the race of men: (11) but since no perfect antidote or remedy can

Schrage (1972:276) agrees with this and says: “Blindness is usually transferred to other spheres of sense of life, e.g., intellectual or moral blindness, and almost always with a negative accent.” Salier (2004:115) points out that in the chorus of *Oedipus Tyrannos* (*Oed. Tyr.* 1367), Sophocles writes the words of Oedipus “thou wert better dead than living blind,” which, in my view, is meant metaphorically, but nonetheless still carries with it the negative associative meaning of blindness (cf. Sophocles, *Oed. Tyr.* 1367; cf. also Seneca, *Oed.* 949; *Phoen.* 179;¹²¹ See also Apuleius, *Metam.* 8.12;¹²² as quoted by Salier 2004:115; See also Bolt 1997:201).¹²³

A condition like blindness is semantically linked to ‘death’ in that blindness takes away that which belongs to life.¹²⁴ Seybold and Müller (1978:121) agree with this and remark: “Die soziale Lage der Blinde war im Normalfall schrecklich. Wenn es auchreiche Blinde gab, so lebte die Mehrzahl in grosser Armut, da ihnen die meisten Berufe verschlossen waren. Ein typisches Bild

be found for the mutilation of the outward senses, by which thousands and thousands of persons have died prematurely while still living, prudence, that best of all qualities within us, sets itself against it to prevent it, implanting eyes in our intellect, which, by reason of its sagacious capacity, are altogether and entirely superior in acuteness of vision to the eyes of the body: (12) for these last see only the surfaces of the things presented to them, and require light from without to enable them to do that, but the intellect penetrates into the inmost recesses of bodies, closely surveying and investigating the whole of them, and each separate part, and also the natures of those incorporeal things, which the external senses are unable to contemplate at all.” (Philo & Yonge 1996, c1993: *ad loc.*)

- 121 In his tragedy *Phoenissae* (179), Seneca says: “Thou shalt hear the truth, Oedipus: less boldly didst thou pluck out thine eyes than thou didst undertake to do.”
- 122 Apuleius recounts in *Metam.* 8.12 (The Golden Ass) how Charite poked out the eyes of Thrasyllus (the man who murdered her husband Tlepolemus) with a needle that kept her hair in place. Shortly thereafter, she committed suicide with the sword her husband used to carry.
- 123 Salier (2004), who wrote an excellent book on the rhetorical impact of the *σημεῖα* in John, was the first scholar to sensitise me to the works of Aeschylus, Athenaeus and Sophocles, as well as other Greek writers taken up in the *Loeb Classical Library* series. He also pointed out the connection between John’s healing acts and the category of “death.” Only his most crucial arguments and quotations are referenced here. In most cases, I researched the primary sources he recalls myself.
- 124 In some cases, blindness was seen as something positive, in the sense that the blind were believed to have held tremendous insight and spiritual vision (cf. Cicero [*Tusc. Disp.* 38–39]). Salier (2004:115) holds that the compassion shown by Jews to the blind does not necessarily mean that they cultivated a positive view of the blind, but: “The presence of special laws concerning the treatment of the blind (e.g. Lev 19.14; Deut 27.18) testifies to the weakness, generally, of their situation. The blind were usually considered to be unfortunate, helpless and worthless (Philo, *Ebr.* 155–6; *Fug.* 123; *Mos.* 1.123–26).”

war deshalb der bettelnde Blinde." Lucretius (*De Rerum Natura*, 3. 445–475) provides insight into the way ancients viewed youth, age and the deterioration of both the body and the soul/spirit:

Praeterea gigni pariter cum corpore et una crescere sentimus pariterque senescere mentem. Nam velut infirmo pueri teneroque vagantur corpore, sic animi sequitor sententia tenvis; inde ubi robustis adolevit viribus artus. Claudicat ingenium, delirat lingua, labat mens, omnia deficiunt atque uno tempore desunt. Ergo dissolui quoque covenit omnen animai naturam, ceu fumus, in altas aeris auras, quandoquidem gigni pariter pariterque videmus crescere et, ut docui, simul aevo fessa fatisci. Huc accedit uti videamus, corpus ut ipsum suscipere inmanis morbos durumque dolorem, sic animum curas acris luctumque metumque; quare participem leti quoque convenit esse.¹²⁵

ROUSE & SMITH 1975:222–223

Even in Jewish scripture, blindness is often associated with 'death'. Schrage (1972:282) argues: "Judaism, too, thought there was no greater trouble and no greater or more severe suffering than blind eyes, Midr. Ps 146, 5 on 146:8. To bring out the full severity of the fate of the blind they are compared to the dead, b.Ned., 64b." Singer et al. (1902:248–249), in the "Jewish Encyclopedia" agree with this:

The ancient nations regarded blindness as the lowest degradation that could be inflicted upon man; hence gouging out the eyes of an enemy was

125 Rouse & Smith (1975:223) translate it as follows: "Besides, we feel that the mind is begotten along with the body, and grows up with it, and with it grows old. For as toddling children have a body infirm and tender, so a weak intelligence goes with it. Next, when their age has grown up into robust strength, the understanding too and the power of the mind is enlarged. Afterwards, when the body is now wrecked with the mighty strength of time, and the frame has succumbed with blunted strength, the intellect limps, the tongue babbles, the intelligence totters, all is wanting and fails at the same time. It follows therefore that the whole nature of the spirit is dissolved abroad, like smoke, into the high winds of the air since we see it begotten along with the body, and growing up along with it, and as I have shown, falling to pieces at the same time worn out with age."

Midr. Midrash on Psalms (Strack, *Einl.*, 215).

b. Babylonian Talmud.

Ned. *Nedarim*, Mishnah-, Tosefta-, Talmud tractate *Vow* (Strack, *Einl.*, 46).

a form of national retaliation.¹²⁶ The Philistines bored out the eyes of Samson, and the king of Babylon blinded Zedekiah. The blind, together with cripples and lepers, were outcasts of society and kept quarantined outside the town limits; they became paupers and a menace to passers-by. In the eyes of the ancient Hebrews the maimed and especially the blind were thought to possess a debased character. The Talmud compares the blind, the leper, the childless, and the pauper with the dead (Ned. 64b), quoting from Lamentations (iii. 6): 'He hath set me in dark places as they that be dead of old.'

SINGER ET AL. 1902:248–249

Isaiah 59:9–10 connects blindness with an existential feeling of disorientation and explicitly relates it to the category of death (cf. מָוֶת). Just like Singer (1902:248), Salier (2004:115) also quotes Lamentations 3:1–2, 6 to illustrate this point. Berges (2002:188–189) agrees and states: "In beiden Texten führt die von Gott provozierte Isolation den Beter and den Rand der Totenwelt." In Lamentations 3:6 (cf. also Tobit 4:2), Tobit complains that it would be better for him to die than to experience blindness and the results thereof in his existential context:¹²⁷ (ἔῃ καὶ νῦν κατὰ τὸ ἀρεστὸν ἐνώπιόν σου ποιήσον μετ' ἐμοῦ, ἐπίταξον ἀναλαβεῖν τὸ πνεῦμά μου, ὅπως ἀπολυθῶ καὶ γένωμαι γῆ, διότι λυσitteλεῖ μοι ἀποθανεῖν ἢ ζῆν, ὅτι ὀνειδισμοὺς ψευδεῖς ἤκουσα, καὶ λύπη ἐστὶν πολλὴ ἐν ἐμοί, ἐπίταξον ἀπολυθῆναι με τῆς ἀνάγκης ἥδη εἰς τὸν αἰώνιον τόπον, μὴ ἀποστρέψῃς τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ἀπ' ἐμοῦ.).¹²⁸

126 See Apuleius, (*Metam.* 8.12/The Golden Ass), where he recounts the story of how Charite poked out the eyes of Thrasyllus (the man who murdered her husband Tlepolemus) with a needle that kept her hair in place. Shortly thereafter, she committed suicide with the sword her husband used to carry.

127 Tobit buried a corpse and, because he was impure, slept against the courtyard wall. According to Tobit 2:10, sparrows' warm droppings fell into his open eyes while he was lying there. As a result, his eyes were filled with "whiteness" and he became blind. Tobit 3:3–5 gives the impression that Tobit, in his prayer to God, harboured the preconception that blindness and sin are related. In Tobit 3:6, Tobit says that it would be better for him to die than to continue living. The reason for this was that he was the victim of false allegations against him, causing him a fair bit of humiliation. Van der Watt and Tolmie (2005:42) translate the last portion of Tobit 3:6 as follows: "Gee tog opdrag dat ek uit hierdie krisis loskom en laat my na my ewige blyplek gaan." Tobit was in all likelihood written between 225 and 175 BC.

128 In his commentary on Tobit 3:6, Moore (1996:140) indicates that Tobit's comment was not strange in contemporary Jewish thought: "Tobit's request is not peculiar to Jews of the Old Testament. A number of scholars allude here to Antigone's lament: 'Anyone who lives

In later Rabbinical writings (cf. *Gen. Rab.* 71.6), we see that certain groups of people (lepers; the blind, the barren and the poor) and their existential situations are explicitly linked to the category of death. Instone-Brewer (2004:264) quotes other Rabbinical writings (cf. *m.Ter.* 1.6 probably after 70 CE—cf. *m.Ter.* 1.1) to argue that the mute, drunk, nude, blind and sexually impure were not allowed to bring sacrifices. The reason why blind people were not allowed to bring sacrifices was because they did not have the ability to select the best offering for God (cf. *m.Ter.* 2.6).¹²⁹ Seybold and Müller (1978:118) agree and add that a semantic connection should be made between the blind, the socially rejected and those who are equated to the dead: “Es ist deshalb verständlich, wenn nach damaliger Auffassung die Existenz Aussätziger sich in nichts von der Toter unterschied (Josephus, Jüdische Altertümer III 11,3). So heisst es dan: Vier werden einem Toten gleichgesetzt: der Arme, der Aussätzige, der Blinde und der Kinderlose”. (See also Josephus *Apion* 2:15 where the blind, the lame and the lepers appear in the same context). Schrage (1972:287) notices: “The association of the blind with the deaf and lame¹³⁰ is traditional . . . and may be due sometimes to summarising or OT quotation,¹³¹ yet it describes correctly the way in which these groups were linked by fate.”

It is further interesting to note the perspective of the Qumran texts on the matter.¹³² Naturally, one should be aware of the fact that the Qumran texts are not necessarily representative of the exact way in which temple-oriented Jews or John's readers thought. Nonetheless, it does at least provide some kind of indication of how certain groups from a certain time-period thought about this matter. It is clear from the Qumran texts that the blind were, on a religious level, thought of as inferior and were prohibited from entering the temple, the symbol of God's divine presence. Blindness and paralysis are often referred to in the same contexts, as if they were on the same categorical level (cf. Also Mt 15:30; 21:14; Lk 14:21). 11Q19 XLIII–XLV under *Col. xlv* (=11Q20 xi–xii) explicitly relates blindness directly to socio-religious impurity and contamination.

in misfortune, as I do, is bound to be better off in death' (Sophocles, *Antigone* 461–64).” (cf. also Sirach 30:17; See Skehan and Di Lella 1987).

129 Cf. Just (1997) for his thesis on the social position of blind people.

130 See Schrage [1972:287 footnote 119] who refers to Mt 11:5; 15:30; 21:14; Lk 14:13; 14:21. Mt 11:5 also has λεπτοί and νεκροί, Mt 15:30 has κυλλοί, Luke 14:13, 21 ἀνάπηροι and John 5:3 has ξηροί. Besides the exception in Mt 15:30 and Lk 14:21, τυφλοί is almost always placed at the beginning or somewhere else where it carries emphasis.

131 For Old Testament quotations in John, see Freed (1965).

132 Cf. the argument in the previous chapter, where the connection between blindness and paralysis, as well as their relation to the category of death, was shown.

But they shall not enter my temple with their soiled impurity and defile it. (11). *Blank*. And a man who lies with his wife and has an ejaculation, for three days shall not enter the whole city of (12) the temple in which I shall cause my name to dwell. *Blank*. No blind person (13) shall enter in *all their days*, and they shall not defile the city in whose midst I dwell (14) because I, YHWH, dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever and always.

MARTÍNEZ AND TIGSCHELAAR 2000A:1263 [ITALICS MINE]

In all cases of impurity and contamination, individuals are able to purify themselves and appear in the presence of God again. The only exception is in the case of blindness. In other words, blindness was perceived as a socio-religious state of being from which liberation was impossible. These concepts are not alien to the Old Testament.¹³³ In 2 Samuel 5:8, the blind are restricted from accessing the temple:

8 καὶ εἶπεν Δαυὶδ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ Πᾶς τύπτων Ἰεβουσαῖον ἀπτέσθω ἐν παραξίφιδι καὶ τοὺς χωλοὺς καὶ τοὺς τυφλοὺς καὶ τοὺς μισοῦντας τὴν ψυχὴν Δαυὶδ, διὰ τοῦτο ἐροῦσιν Τυφλοὶ καὶ χωλοὶ οὐκ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς οἶκον κυρίου.

From the perspective of Jewish Writings, it was clearly expected that the Messiah would be the One to (metaphorically)¹³⁴ open the eyes of the blind. Salier (2004:117) is correct when he says that “[T]he literal opening of the eyes of a blind person could easily be seen to fulfil the metaphorical sense of the statement in Isaiah 42. A sign of the restoration of Israel in the second exodus as described in Isaiah will be the opening of the eyes of the blind (Is 29:18; 35:5).”

133 Nevertheless, the post-exilic 2 Esdras 2:20–23 clearly makes a case for protecting the blind, the fatherless, the poor, the orphans, the widows, etcetera, possibly because of their frailty (cf. *The Apocrypha King James Version*): “²⁰ Do right to the widow, judge for the fatherless, give to the poor, defend the orphan, clothe the naked, ²¹ Heal the broken and the weak, laugh not a lame man to scorn, defend the maimed, and let the blind man come into the sight of my clearness. ²² Keep the old and young within thy walls. ²³ Wheresoever thou findest the dead, take them and bury them, and I will give thee the first place in my resurrection.” Yet, this is not sufficient evidence that the blind were not impure or that blindness did not carry negative socio-religious associations. Many other biblical and extra-biblical texts clearly betray such negative associations, as has been argued. In my view, it was precisely the fragility of these existential situations, the socio-religious problems associated therewith and the horrid treatment of these individuals that prompted the appeal in 2 Esdras 2. Esdras longed to leave Babylon for Jerusalem and work on the restoration of Israel.”

134 Cf. Dt 28:65; Zph 12:4; Job 11:20; 17:5; 21:17; Ps 69:23; Pr 13:9; 20:20; 24:19–20.

As argued earlier on, there was an expectation that the very same Messiah, who would come to save, would also heal people and bring about restoration (cf. Is 42:6–7). Seybold and Müller (1978:122) point out that “Alles, was Gott in dieser Welt geschlagen hat, wird er einst wieder heilen. So werde die Blinden geheilt werden. Wenn er kommt, um die Welt zu heilen, heilt er zuerst die Blinden”. The healing of the blind is the exclusive prerogative of the God as Creator (cf. Is 35:5; 29:18; Ps 146:8). Thus, if Jesus is able to let the blind see, it inextricably links him to God, in that only God can perform such deeds. Already in John 3:2, Nicodemus notices: “οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἐλήλυθας διδάσκαλος· οὐδεὶς γὰρ δύναται ταῦτα τὰ σημεῖα ποιεῖν ἃ σὺ ποιεῖς, ἐὰν μὴ ᾗ ὁ θεὸς μετ’ αὐτοῦ.” Hence, the healing acts of Jesus are prominent signs that illustrate his close relationship with the Father (cf. 1:18; 5:19–21; See Ridderbos 1997:191; Morris 1995:277). This means that the healings as *σημεῖα* play a crucial role in illustrating who Jesus is. In Isaiah 35:5–6, for example, we read:¹³⁵

τότε ἀνοιχθήσονται ὀφθαλμοὶ τυφλῶν, καὶ ὦτα κωφῶν ἀκούσονται. ⁶ τότε ἀλείπεται ὡς ἔλαφος ὁ χωλός, καὶ τρανὴ ἔσται γλώσσα μογιλάλων, ὅτι ἐρράγη ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ὕδωρ καὶ φάραγξ ἐν γῇ διψώσῃ, . . .

The Healing Act as (Re)creation

The healing of someone that, as a result of his ailment, finds himself in the category of ‘death,’ was indeed seen by the ancients as an act of recreation, in the sense that life was being created—something that was the prerogative of the Creating/Creator God. Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 5.15.5) holds that this healing act and the use of clay allude to the *Creation-motif*. Edwards (2004:99) agrees with this and also refers to Irenaeus: “Here, according to Irenaeus, Christ re-enacts the creation of man from clay . . .”

Jesus sends the man to the pool with the name ‘Sent’ (Beasley-Murray 1987:157).¹³⁶ But it is not the water of the pool that heals the man, but the true One who was sent (cf. Chrysostom *Homily* 56.2).¹³⁷ Jesus is the power and source of life behind the healing and not the pool of Siloam (Edwards 2003

135 Isaiah 35:5–6 can be translated as follows (NIV): “⁵ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. ⁶ Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.”

136 According to Ridderbos (1997:336), the pool of Siloam was known for purity rituals.

137 Carson (1991:365) agrees and says: “John’s readers know that, although the healing is as thorough as the blind man’s obedience, the power itself came not from the obedience, nor from a pool called ‘Sent’, but from the ‘sent one’ himself.”

and 2004:99). Against the background of the fact that the man was born blind, the healing act can, in my view, be understood within the framework of recreation, because he receives sight and life, which he never had before. As blindness was categorically associated with death, Jesus is here depicted as the true source of life. In 8:12, Jesus says ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου· ὁ ἀκολουθῶν ἐμοὶ οὐ μὴ περιπατήσει ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, ἀλλ' ἔξει τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς. Jesus, as the living 'light' (1:4; 8:12), meets the man in the midst of an existential situation indicative of death, 'darkness' and the loss of life potential. Jesus transforms the crisis situation and heals the man by giving 'life' to his 'dead,' 'lifeless' eyes. He brings 'light' and sight into existence by, speaking a word—calling into remembrance how God spoke creation into existence at the creation event. In similar manner, the symbols of light, life (cf. 8:12) and clay in this context calls to mind the creation story. 'Light' and clay fulfilled an important role within that context. Associatively, 'light' is linked to the first entity created by God (cf. Gn 1:3), and clay to the last, which was the creation of man (cf. Gn 2:6–7; cf. Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 5.15.5). Light, as an essential part of the Son, is already in the prologue connected with the motifs of life and creation (See Brown 1966:6–7). Here again, John makes use of an extreme situation of existential crisis and death to illustrate that the Son is indeed the source of life. That we are confronted here with such an extreme existential situation is strengthened by the fact that "The giving of sight to the congenitally blind is almost without precedent" (Salier 2004:116; See also Just 1997:153).¹³⁸

Carson (1991:365) rightly points out: "Now the man (who of course has still not seen Jesus) obeys and washes, *and came home seeing*." It is conclusively clear that faith plays an important role in this healing narrative and that healing occurs without the man being able to physically see Jesus. The reader is reminded of the statement Jesus made to the nobleman in John 4:48—"ἐὰν μὴ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἴδῃτε, οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε." There we saw Jesus speaking life-creating words, and that the man had to return to the deadly crisis situation in faith alone, without immediately having seen the miracle transpire. In the same way, Jesus is here depicted as speaking life-creating words that only hold the promise of recreation and restoration, because the fulfilment of those words for the blind man, do not realise immediately. Just like the nobleman, the blind man also had to have faith in the words of Jesus for that promise to effect recreation. With this, the author creates the impression with the reader that the words of Jesus contain life-creating power, and that those who believe the words of Jesus will indeed see results. As such, the content of what Jesus

138 See the book of Just (1997), where the role of blind people during New Testament times and the socio-religious attitudes towards them is investigated.

says must be taken seriously (cf. 8:31, 37, 47, 51; 10:21; 12:47, 48; 14:10, 23, 24). It is the words of Jesus that create life, but also his ability to create life that illustrates the truth behind those words (cf. 10:21). The words of Jesus are “power-words” that cross over into physical realities. They do not remain floating about, but realise . . . But, this the reader already knows from the prologue: The Word became flesh (1:14). Likewise, the words of the Word become palpable, visible, fleshed out realities of recreation that call to mind God as the Creator, who creates life with the mere uttering of a word. Köstenberger (2004:187) is therefore correct when he says: “According to Jesus, the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it, just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life. The OT and Second Temple literature concur that raising the dead and giving life are prerogatives of God” (cf. Dt 32:39; 1 Sm 2:6; 2 Ki 5:7; Tobit 13:2). Hence, it seems that John himself establishes a correlation between the two categories of ‘giving life’ and ‘resurrecting the dead.’ Seybold and Müller refer to the healing of the lepers, who, as a result of their disease, categorically are seen to be ‘dead,’ and relate this healing to the resurrection from the dead:

Die Lebensqualität Aussätziger war in einer Weise sozial und religiös gemindert, dass sie eher der Domäne des Todes als des Lebens angehörten. Dementsprechend galt die Aussätzigtigenheilung einer Totenerweckung gleich. Nach rabbinischer Auffassung ist sie so schwer wie die Auferweckung eines Toten. So ist nur möglich als Heilung durch Gott. Sollte ein Kranker geheilt werden, so muss der Priester den Geheilten danach ausdrücklich für rein erklären. Erst dann darf er sich wieder normal in menschlicher Gesellschaft aufhalten.

SEYBOLD & MÜLLER 1978:118

According to Ridderbos (1997:336), the pool of Siloam was strongly associated with the rituals characteristic of the Feast of Tabernacles. In this feast, the image of ‘light’ also plays an important role. Within the context of the Feast of Tabernacles, it is clear that 9:5 is linked to 8:12. In light thereof, Ridderbos (1997:336) makes the following statement: “... Jesus says of himself that he is the ‘light’ of the world, so in the sending of the blind man Jesus is revealed as the one who grants the living water, of which the name of the pool had become symbolic (cf. 7:37ff.).”¹³⁹ The connection between these verses (9:6–7)

139 Cullmann (1976) identifies several strong sacramental motives in the Gospel. These motives have prompted many to make a connection between the sending of the man to Siloam and baptism. Brown (1971:380–382) points to the role of John 9 in the early church’s understanding of the sacrament of baptism. According to Schnackenburg (1968:257vv.),

and the preceding verses are clear: *Ailments, like blindness, are categorically linked to death and at the least, inhibits life*, as was argued above. The man's blindness leaves him in physical darkness, with the result that he is unable to see. Because of his inability to see, much of his physical and socio-religious life possibilities are taken away. In ancient times, illness was more than just a biological dysfunctionality. Illness had essential implications for social and religious functionality and life potential.

On a spiritual level, we know that unbelievers are in a deadly existential state and that they walk in darkness, as they are spiritually blind. For all (theological) purposes, the blind man is, during his interaction with Jesus, also an unbeliever and thus also spiritually blind.¹⁴⁰ As such, we can make the statement that the man did not just occupy an existential state of physical darkness, but also an existential state of spiritual 'darkness' or death.

Jesus is the 'light' of the world. As we saw earlier, 'light' *was associated with life*.¹⁴¹ With the healing act, Jesus illustrates that he is indeed the 'light' of the world and the source of life (See Carson 1991:363; Köstenberger 2004:282). Jesus recreates the man's sight and in the process also creates biological and socio-religious life possibilities for him. Later on, we will see that Jesus did not just give the man biological and socio-religious life possibilities, but also eschatological life possibilities within the family of God. Thus, Milgrom (1991:889) notes: "As the celebrant moves from the realm of impurity outside the camp to be restored first to his community, then to his home, and finally to his sanctuary, he has passed from impurity to holiness, from death to life, is reinstated with his family, and reconciled with his God."

the symbol of baptism should not be read into John 9: "There is no really convincing basis in the text for crediting the evangelist with the intension of employing baptismal symbolism." Ridderbos (1997:337) also thinks that the arguments in favour of sacramental referencing are not sustainable: "Still, any illusion to baptism is lacking..." Bultmann (1971:33) holds that a redactor added the comment that explains the meaning of the name Siloam. This addition brings the symbolic dimension of the narrative to the fore and elevates it to an allegorical level. Bultmann (1971:33) notes: "Jesus is the Ἀπεσταλμένος (3.17, 34; 5.36 etc); as the blind man receives the light of day through the water of Siloam, so faith receives the light of the revelation from Jesus, the 'emissary'."

140 Ridderbos (1997:335) points out that it was not the man who initiated contact with Jesus. Jesus is the primary acting subject that initiates contact. There is no explicit mention of the role that faith plays in the healing narrative. Faith and confession only enter much later in the course of the narrative.

141 Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:170) say: "Light is also associated with life. When Jesus says he is the 'light of the world' he is saying that he enables Israel to see the way things really are and that he is likewise the source of Israel's life."

The Healing as Sign

Earlier on in the book, it was argued that the healing narratives are not described in the Gospel for their own sake. Repeatedly, the healing narratives point to a “greater” spiritual truth. Similarly, the current healing narrative does not only serve as an indication that Jesus was able to heal a blind man, but also indicates that he truly is the ‘light’ of the world. By healing or restoring the man, Jesus brings about reconciliation on both horizontal (man and society) and vertical levels (the man and God) of the man’s relationships. In the same or in a similar way, Jesus is the one who heals and restores the faithlessness of a blind humanity, in imitation of his Father (cf. 5:19v.). *Faith in the sent Son of God leads to healing and reconciliation on both horizontal and vertical levels.* In 5:24,¹⁴² Jesus says that those who believe have already crossed over from death to (eternal) life. In other words, they are already (and forever) reconciled with God, even though John himself does not use the word reconciliation. In this context, the sign does not occur for its own sake, but points to this greater reality Jesus came to bring, namely that people would not perish, but have everlasting life (3:16).

At this stage of the narrative, Jesus disappears from the scene, and only returns again in 9:35. According to Carson (1991:365), the first impression one gets is that the blind man is here in the limelight. He rightly points out though, that this is not the case: “... the healed man is merely the occasion of the discussion, the stone of offence, while at the heart of the ensuing debate is Jesus himself.”¹⁴³ Salier (2004:111) agrees and argues further that it is impossible to read the healing narrative separate from the following discourse:

While the actual account of the action here in chapter 9 takes only a few verses, the whole narrative includes an extended discourse that is an integral part of the presentation. This narrative is marked by the prolonged absence of Jesus from the scene, though there is a sense in which he remains as the focal point of the conversation and action. It is through

142 John 5:24 reads: ²⁴ Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ὁ τὸν λόγον μου ἀκούων καὶ πιστεύων τῷ πέμψαντί με ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον καὶ εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται, ἀλλὰ μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν. Translation of John 5:24 (KJV): “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

143 See Blank (1964:255). According to Witherington (1995:180), the healing of the blind deserves special mention in the Gospels: “Yet it is very striking that among the miracles of compassion there are more miracles of giving sight to the blind recorded of Jesus than of any other sort of miracle.” See Matthew 9:27–31; 12:22v.; 15:30v.; 21:14v.; Mark 8:22–26; 10:46–52; Luke 7:21v.; and John 9:1v.

the dialogue between the Pharisees and the healed man and other witnesses that the significance of the action is conveyed.

SALIER 2004:111

We can agree with Salier (2004:111) that the subsequent discourse develops the full meaning of the healing act. As such, it is crucial to analyse this passage also, so that we may interpret the healing act within its rightful context as *semeion*.

5.2.2 *An Exegetical Study of John 9:8–12: The Interrogation of the Blind Man by his Neighbours*

John 9:8–12

8 Οἱ οὖν γείτονες καὶ οἱ θεωροῦντες αὐτὸν τὸ πρότερον ὅτι προσαίτης ἦν ἔλεγον, Οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ καθήμενος καὶ προσαιτῶν; 9 ἄλλοι ἔλεγον ὅτι Οὗτός ἐστιν, ἄλλοι ἔλεγον, Οὐχί, ἀλλὰ ὁμοιος αὐτῷ ἐστιν. ἐκεῖνος ἔλεγεν ὅτι Ἐγὼ εἰμι. 10 ἔλεγον οὖν αὐτῷ, Πῶς [οὖν] ἤνεώχθησάν σου οἱ ὀφθαλμοί; 11 ἀπεκρίθη ἐκεῖνος, Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ λεγόμενος Ἰησοῦς πηλὸν ἐποίησεν καὶ ἐπέχρισέν μου τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ εἶπέν μοι ὅτι Ὑπαγε εἰς τὸν Σιλωάμ· καὶ νίψαι· ἀπελθὼν οὖν καὶ νιψάμενος ἀνέβλεψα. 12 καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ, Ποῦ ἐστιν ἐκεῖνος; λέγει, Οὐκ οἶδα.¹⁴⁴

The neighbours describe the blind man as the one who always begged.¹⁴⁵ Malina and Rohrbaugh say: “Beggars were among the expendables present in every ancient city. Most were forced to live outside the city but came into city streets during daytime to beg.” The blind were socio-religious outcasts, who were not allowed to offer at the temple and they lacked any social honour in the eyes of others. According to Ridderbos (1997:338), the expression “Οὐχ οὗτός” (Jn 9:8) is indicative of the “undeniable reality of what they saw.”¹⁴⁶ Haenchen

144 Translation (KJV): “⁸ The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? ⁹ Some said, this is he: others said, he is like him: but he said, I am he. ¹⁰ Therefore said they unto him, how were thine eyes opened? ¹¹ He answered and said, a man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. ¹² Then said they unto him, where is he? He said, I know not.”

145 Carson (1991:365) notes: “A congenitally blind man was unlikely to be able to support himself by any means other than begging.” See also Ridderbos (1997:337).

146 Bultmann (1971:33) says: “The dilemma of the authorities is reflected in the crowd’s confusion.”

(1980:379) adds: “Das manche den frühen Blinden nicht wiedererkennen, veranschaulicht die Verwandlung, die mit ihm vorgegangen ist, und damit indirekt die Wirklichkeit des Wunders.” The neighbours could not believe their own eyes, and wanted to know who it was that opened his eyes.¹⁴⁷ The man answered their query and declared¹⁴⁸ that it was a man called Jesus who gave him the specific command that led to his healing, but that he did not know exactly where this man was.¹⁴⁹

5.2.3 *An Exegetical Study of John 9:13–17: The Pharisees Question Jesus*

John 9:13–17

13 Ἄγουσιν αὐτὸν πρὸς τοὺς Φαρισαίους τὸν ποτε τυφλόν. 14 ἦν δὲ σάββατον ἐν ἡ ἡμέρᾳ τὸν πηλὸν ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἀνέωξεν αὐτοῦ τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς. 15 πάλιν οὖν ἡρώτων αὐτὸν καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι πῶς ἀνέβλεψεν. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Πηλὸν ἐπέθηκέν μου ἐπὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς, καὶ ἐνιψάμην καὶ βλέπω. 16 ἔλεγον οὖν ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων τινές, Οὐκ ἔστιν οὗτος παρὰ θεοῦ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ὅτι τὸ σάββατον οὐ τηρεῖ. ἄλλοι [δὲ] ἔλεγον, Πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος ἁμαρτωλὸς τοιαῦτα σημεῖα ποιεῖν; καὶ σχίσμα ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς. 17 λέγουσιν οὖν

147 Carson (1991:365–366) opines: “His neighbours had become so used to the sight of him doing so that they were flabbergasted to think the blind beggar could now see.”

148 Carson (1991:366) sees a difference between the respective characters of the blind man and the lame man in chapter 5. As opposed to the lame man’s “inability to seize the opportunity,” this man is quick to react to the attacks and questions of his opponents. In his view, this indicates not only the “stylistic versatility” of the author, but also diversity of people Jesus served.

149 Ridderbos (1997:338) says: For now that is all he knows to say about Jesus. Gradually that will change (vss. 17, 33, 38). Bultmann (1971:333–334) says: “Unlike the healed man in 5.12f., he does at least know the name of the one who has helped him, but has no idea where he might be found (v. 12). As conceived by the Evangelist, all this points to the astonishing and unpredictable nature of the event of revelation.” Hoskyns (1947:355–256) directs us to the growing comprehension in this passage of who Jesus is. Initially, He is simply acknowledged to be the man called Jesus (9:11–12). Then, as a result of the miracle He performed, Jesus is called a prophet (9:17,25). Thereafter, He is referred to as the One who was sent by God (9:30, 32, 33) Finally, He is called the Son of Man (9:35). Hoskyns (1947:356) says: “The man, as he passes thus from blindness to complete illumination and consequently to adoration, is contrasted step by step with the Pharisees and with the Jews, who, regarding the Christ as a man and a sinner, and denying the miracle (vv. 16, 18, 24), are shown to be ignorant (v. 29), and blasphemous (v. 34), and are finally formally declared blind and in sin (vv. 39–41).”

τῷ τυφλῷ πάλιν, Τί σὺ λέγεις περὶ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἠνέωξέν σου τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς; ὁ δὲ εἶπεν ὅτι Προφήτης ἐστίν.¹⁵⁰

Bultmann (1971:334) typifies this passage as the “*First examination of the healed man.*” The healed man is taken to the Pharisees (Carson 1991:366).¹⁵¹ In such situations, the Pharisees were the representatives of the socio-religious system (Bultmann 1971:334). That the healing took place on the Sabbath is communicated for the first time in 9:14. In 9:4, just before the healing act takes place, Jesus says: ἡμᾶς¹⁵² δεῖ ἐργάζεσθαι τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντός με ἕως ἡμέρας ἐστίν· ἔρχεται νύξ ὅτε οὐδεὶς δύναται ἐργάζεσθαι. Jesus says that the works (τὰ ἔργα) of God must be done while it is still day, because when night time falls, it can’t be done anymore. It is important to note the word ‘works’ (τὰ ἔργα). In the time of Jesus, one of Judaism’s most vital values was the issue of God’s holiness (cf. Lv 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7, 26; 21:28 etc). In line with Genesis 1, it is accepted that God created the world orderly. This order is apparent from the specificity of the ‘maps’ of time, objects, places, diets and persons. Neyrey (1991:277) says:

This ‘holiness’ came to be embodied especially in the central symbol of Israel’s culture, the temple system, where specific maps, replicating the

150 Translation (KJV): “¹³ They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. ¹⁴ And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. ¹⁶ Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, how can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. ¹⁷ They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? he said, he is a prophet.”

151 Carson (1991:366) thinks that the neighbours took the man to the Pharisees because they were the religious representatives: “They simply wanted advice from their local synagogue leaders. At that level, the Sadducees counted for relatively little; the Pharisees counted for far more.”

152 Beasley-Murray (1987: *ad loc*) points to the results of text-critical research: “ἡμᾶς (δεῖ) is better attested than ἐμέ and was more likely to be altered than vice versa. By contrast πέμψαντός ἡμᾶς instead of πέμψαντός με appears to be due to assimilation to ἡμᾶς δεῖ.” Hendriksen (1978:73) holds on to the plural “we” and argues that “the textual evidence furnishes no adequate reason to depart from this reading.” Barrett (1978:357) recalls Martyn, who argues that it points to the “continuation of Jesus’ works . . . in the deeds of Christian witnesses.” Brown (1966:372) recalls Bultmann, who prefers the “we” translation and holds that the current construction was introduced by the Christian community.

patterns of Gen 1, regulated that focal symbol of the Jewish world, which was often thought to be the centre of the universe.

NEYREY 1991:277

The macro-map of time looked as follows:

1. Sabbath
2. Pesach (Passover)
3. Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)
4. Sukkoth (Feast of Tabernacles)
5. Festival days
6. Rosh Hashanah (Feast of New Year)
7. Days of fasting
8. Feast of Purim
9. Mid-festival days

According to the map of time, Sabbath was the holiest time. During holy times (e.g. the Sabbath), one encounters *an intensified application of purity laws* or maps of purity. No one was allowed to do (ἐργάζεσθαι) works (τὰ ἔργα) on the Sabbath. Jesus qualifies the healing act as ‘works’ of God.

As far as the Jews were concerned, Jesus had transgressed Sabbatical laws and had disrupted the socio-religious order, thereby desecrating the holy day. Jesus was ‘out of place.’ That which is out of place was seen as a source of contamination (Neyrey 1991:274, 281). It is within this context that Jesus is called a sinner (ἁμαρτωλός) by the Jews. Neyrey (1991:282) notes that: “Sinners, likewise, do not belong in the same space as observant Jews. . . .” In the story of the man who was born blind (John 9:1–41), the healing act also occurs on the Sabbath. Jesus spat on the ground and “kneaded the spittle into clay, and put this on the eyes of the blind man to restore his sight, v. 6f. Kneading, however, is listed expressly among the 39 chief tasks forbidden on the Sabbath, Shab, 7, 2.” (Kittel et al. 1976 vol 7:28).¹⁵³ Jesus is viewed as a sinner because he failed to keep the Sabbath (9:16).¹⁵⁴ Yet, there are those who wonder how exactly a

153 See also Hendriksen (1976:80–81): “To take mud on the sabbath and on that day to cover a person’s eyes with this mud was a violation of the regulations. Also, on the sabbath it was not permissible to practice the art of healing, except in cases of extreme emergency.”

154 Bultmann (1971:334) notes: “This state of affairs is briefly described in v. 15, and in v. 16 we are told of the authorities’ dilemma: the miracle seems to show that Jesus’ actions are divinely accredited, but the breach of the Sabbath laws runs counter to this assumption, since it shows that Jesus is a sinner.”

sinner is capable of such wonderful works, resulting in division (σχίσμα) amongst the Jews (9:16).¹⁵⁵ The work of Jesus on the Sabbath illustrates that he is the fulfilment of the Sabbath. Jesus is the “rest” of God. Jesus is the one who rescues people from a deadly existence. He is the one who brings life where there used to be death. Jesus is the one who restores broken relationships between people and God, on the one hand, and between people themselves, on the other. Indeed, Jesus is the sent agent of God, the ‘light’ of the world (φῶς τοῦ κόσμου 9:5; 8:12), and the ‘light’ that gives life.¹⁵⁶

Again the Jews say to the blind man (9:17): ‘You, what do you¹⁵⁷ say about Him, seeing as He opened your eyes?’¹⁵⁸ And the man answers: “He is a prophet” (Προφήτης).¹⁵⁹ Hendriksen (1976:84) is correct when he says that the man’s spiritual eyes are progressively opening up. Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:172) describes it accurately as the man’s “next stage of enlightenment: he now identifies Jesus as a prophet.” Carson (1991:368) says: “This man’s eyes are opening wider: he is beginning to see still more clearly, while the eyes of his judges are becoming clouded over with blinding, theological mist.”

155 Beasley-Murray (1987:157) notices that the (cf. 7:43; 10:19) the Evangelist explicitly mentions their division over Jesus.” This illustrates that not even the opponents of Jesus could deny the factuality of his miracles.

156 See Kittel, Bromiley & Friedrich (1972: *ad loc*).

157 Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:172) say: “The Greek pronoun in their question (What do *you* say . . .) is emphatic. The healed man has now begun to play the broker role for which he was ‘sent’.”

158 Carson (1991:367) holds that the Pharisees undertook a thorough investigation, during which the man with the necessary information came forward. Ridderbos (1997:339) opines that, in this context, οὗτος does not refer back to the *fact* of the healing, since the Pharisees did not believe that Jesus actually performed a healing miracle. Instead of referencing the miracle, he argues that the word references the man’s interpretation or the story itself.

159 See Bultmann (1971:334). Carson (1991:368) reminds us that the identification of Jesus as a prophet could be interpreted in two ways. It can either refer to Jesus as a prophet (4:19) or to Jesus as the prophet (6:14). He believes that the man possibly referred to Jesus as ‘the prophet’. Hendriksen (1976:81) is of the opinion that the man’s responses become increasingly shorter and more concise with each passing interrogation. According to him, the man counts his words in each instance. In my view, there are signs of progression. Initially, He is simply described as ‘the man with the name Jesus’ (cf. 9:11) and later as ‘prophet’ (cf. 9:17). See also Hendriksen (1976:81–83) for a discussion on the two “Syllogisms” concerning the interpretation of the identity of Jesus as being a sinner, or coming from God. See also Carson (1991:367–368) for a similar discussion.

5.2.4 *An Exgetical Study of John 9:18–23: The Jews Question the Man's Parents*

John 9:18–23

18 Οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι περὶ αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἦν τυφλὸς καὶ ἀνέβλεψεν ἕως ὅτου ἐφώνησαν τοὺς γονεῖς αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀναβλέψαντος 19 καὶ ἠρώτησαν αὐτοὺς λέγοντες, Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς ὑμῶν, ὃν ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι τυφλὸς ἐγεννήθη; πῶς οὖν βλέπει ἄρτι; 20 ἀπεκρίθησαν οὖν οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπαν, Οἶδαμεν ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς ἡμῶν καὶ ὅτι τυφλὸς ἐγεννήθη· 21 πῶς δὲ νῦν βλέπει οὐκ οἶδαμεν, ἢ τίς ἤνοιξεν αὐτοῦ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἡμεῖς οὐκ οἶδαμεν· αὐτὸν ἐρωτήσατε, ἡλικίαν ἔχει, αὐτὸς περὶ ἑαυτοῦ λαλήσει. 22 ταῦτα εἶπαν οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἐφοβοῦντο τοὺς Ἰουδαίους· ἡδὴ γὰρ συνετέθειντο οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἵνα ἐάν τις αὐτὸν ὁμολογήσῃ Χριστόν, ἀποσυνάγωγος γένηται. 23 διὰ τοῦτο οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ εἶπαν ὅτι Ἠλικίαν ἔχει, αὐτὸν ἐπερωτήσατε.¹⁶⁰

The Jews¹⁶¹ did not believe (Οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν) that the man was blind and that Jesus healed him (9:18). Carson (1991:369) is of the opinion that the Jews questioned the man's testimony. Carson (1991:369) also remarks: "That the authorities press the healed man's *parents* on these points suggests that they are prepared to doubt the healed man's witness on the first two points, that he was unreliable on the third, and theologically confused or naïve on the fourth." The four points he refers to are: (1) Are the neighbours certain of the man's identity?; (2) Was the man blind before the apparent healing?; (3) Was the man blind since birth?; (4) If the latter is true, what is the parents' opinion of the healing?

That is why the Jews decided to question the man's parents themselves. It was an attempt to resolve the current crisis (Hendriksen 1976:85; Carson 1991:368; Morris 1995:432; Schnackenburg 1990:2.249). However, the parents

160 Translation (KJV): "18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. 19 And they asked them, saying, is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see? 20 His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: 21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. 22 These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. 23 Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him."

161 Beasley-Murray (1987:157) notices that the "Pharisees" of 9:13, 15 and 16 are now called the "Jews".

confirm that their son was blind since birth and that he has apparently been healed (Carson 1991:369). With that they confirm the unmistakable reality of the miracle. As such, the Jews fail in their attempt to force the parents into a corner (Ridderbos 1997:340).¹⁶² However, the man's parents are cautious in divulging who exactly the man was that carried out the healing. Hendriksen (1976:86) drives the point home: "The parents shy away from the question. They also lie. They *do* know how it is that their son now sees. He has certainly told them all about the miracle." That is why they refer the Pharisees back to the son's testimony (9:21) (Beasley-Murray 1987:157).¹⁶³ The reason for this was their fear of being banned from the synagogue (Malina and Rohrbaugh 1998:173). Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:173) say: "The fear of the parents that they might be expelled is usually thought to be an anachronism from late in the first century, reflecting the debate in that period between the disciples of Jesus and the disciples of Moses (see vv. 28–29)." Ridderbos (1997:341) is of the opinion that: "They avoid all allusion to Jesus since that might bring them under suspicion of confessing Jesus as the Christ." According to him, the Jews did not believe that Jesus healed the man of blindness. Their answer must have come as a shock, especially since the parents' testimony witnessed in favour of the reality of the miracle. The Jews obviously hoped for an alternative result. The opinion of the latter two scholars is confirmed by Bultmann (1971:335): "Now they examine the healed man's parents, with the result, however, that the offending fact remains as real as ever, as does their dilemma."

5.2.5 *An Exegetical Study of John 9:24–34: The Second Interrogation and Banning of the Man*

John 9:24–34

24 Ἐφώνησαν οὖν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐκ δευτέρου ὃς ἦν τυφλὸς καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ, Δὸς δόξαν τῷ θεῷ· ἡμεῖς οἶδαμεν ὅτι οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἁμαρτωλὸς ἐστίν. 25 ἀπεκρίθη οὖν ἐκεῖνος, Εἰ ἁμαρτωλὸς ἐστίν οὐκ οἶδα· ἐν οἷδα ὅτι τυφλὸς ὢν ἄρτι βλέπω. 26 εἶπον οὖν αὐτῷ, Τί ἐποίησέν σοι; πῶς ἤνοιξέν σου τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς; 27 ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς, Εἶπον ὑμῖν ἤδη καὶ οὐκ ἠκούσατε· τί πάλιν θέλετε ἀκοῦειν; μὴ καὶ ὑμεῖς θέλετε αὐτοῦ μαθηταὶ γενέσθαι; 28 καὶ

¹⁶² See Bultmann (1971:335).

¹⁶³ Barrett (1978:361) points out that a child had to be thirteen or older to manage his own testimony at a court proceeding.

ἐλοιδόρησαν αὐτὸν καὶ εἶπον, Σὺ μαθητὴς εἶ ἐκείνου, ἡμεῖς δὲ τοῦ Μωϋσέως ἐσμέν μαθηταί·
 29 ἡμεῖς οἶδαμεν ὅτι Μωϋσεὶ λελάληκεν ὁ θεός, τοῦτον δὲ οὐκ οἶδαμεν πόθεν ἐστίν. 30
 ἀπεκρίθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Ἐν τούτῳ γὰρ τὸ θαυμαστόν ἐστιν, ὅτι ὑμεῖς οὐκ
 οἶδατε πόθεν ἐστίν, καὶ ἤνοιξέν μου τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς. 31 οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἁμαρτωλῶν ὁ θεὸς οὐκ
 ἀκούει, ἀλλ' ἐάν τις θεοσεβῇς ἢ καὶ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ποιῇ τούτου ἀκούει. 32 ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος
 οὐκ ἠκούσθη ὅτι ἠνέωξεν τις ὀφθαλμούς τυφλοῦ γεγεννημένου· 33 εἰ μὴ ἦν οὗτος παρὰ θεοῦ,
 οὐκ ἦδύνατο ποιεῖν οὐδέν. 34 ἀπεκρίθησαν καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ, Ἐν ἁμαρτίαις σὺ ἐγεννήθης ὅλος
 καὶ σὺ διδάσκεις ἡμᾶς; καὶ ἐξέβαλον αὐτὸν ἔξω.¹⁶⁴

The man is called (Ἐφώνησαν) for a second time (δευτέρου) by the Pharisees.¹⁶⁵ The Greek text (9:24) literally says: “Give the honour to God” (Δὸς δόξαν τῷ θεῷ). Beasley-Murray (1987:158) is of the opinion that this should be interpreted as an order that the man should confess his sin of lying about the apparent healing (See also Köstenberger 2004:289). Newman and Nida (1980:312) agree and point out that the expression “Δὸς δόξαν τῷ θεῷ” was a formula used when an oath was given, “especially one involving confession of guilt.”

The Jews clearly state that they had already labelled¹⁶⁶ Jesus as a sinner (ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἁμαρτωλός ἐστιν).¹⁶⁷ Malina and Neyrey (1991:99) say: “When people are put on trial, they are necessarily accused of charges which the accuser

164 Translation (KJV): “²⁴ Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. ²⁵ He answered and said, whether he be a sinner *or no*, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. ²⁶ Then said they to him again, what did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes? ²⁷ He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear *it* again? Will ye also be his disciples? ²⁸ Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses’ disciples. ²⁹ We know that God spake unto Moses: *as for this fellow*, we know not from whence he is. ³⁰ The man answered and said unto them, why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and *yet* he hath opened mine eyes. ³¹ Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. ³² Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. ³³ If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. ³⁴ They answered and said unto him, thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.”

165 Bultmann (1971:335) describes this periscope as the “*Second examination of the healed man.*”

166 Malina and Neyrey (1991:99) say: “Labels such as “sinner,” “unclean,” . . . are powerful social weapons. In the mouths of influential persons, they can inflict genuine injury when they succeed in defining a person as radically out of place.”

167 Bultmann (1971:335) says: “Outwardly therefore they act correctly, and take considerable trouble over the matter. But in reality they have already made up their minds: “We know that this man is a sinner.” According to Bultmann, the Jews are trying here to convince the

deems serious.” The Jews saw Jesus as a sinner because He violated Sabbatical law on purpose (8:29,46; 9:16v.).¹⁶⁸ That is why they simply cannot accept Jesus’ association with God. The healed man on the other hand testifies that he is unable to say with certainty whether or not Jesus is a sinner, but that he can safely say that he used to be blind, and now he sees (See Witherington 1995:389; Ridderbos 1997:344). At this juncture, it becomes clear that the Jews are moving towards a theological and dogmatic dead end. Köstenberger (2004:289) states: “Thus the Pharisees’ theoretical and dogmatic assumptions ran into the indisputable and unalterable fact of the man’s restored sight . . . From the two assertions—the man’s sight and Jesus’ guilt—the only viable conclusion is that the law must have been superseded . . .” (See also Barrett 1978:362).

Still the Jews continue to challenge the man and ask him to explain, once again, how he was healed (9:26). The man then shifts gears from a defensive to an offensive position and challenges the Pharisees (cf. 9:27–29) (Ridderbos 1997:345). He refuses to explain for a second time how the healing took place, since they didn’t even listen (οὐκ ἠκούσατε) the first time round. He then inquires from them why they feel the need to hear (ἀκούειν) everything again and sarcastically asks if they wouldn’t like to become disciples of Jesus (9:27). In the background, the words of Jesus in 8:47 resonate—ὁ ὢν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ ῥήματα τοῦ θεοῦ ἀκούει· διὰ τοῦτο ὑμεῖς οὐκ ἀκούετε, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἐστέ.¹⁶⁹ Once again John implies that the Jews are the true children of the devil (cf. 8:44), who do not listen to the words of God. In reality, they are the ones who are spiritually blind.

The Jews scolded (ἐλοιδόρησαν)¹⁷⁰ the man and then branded him as a disciple of the one (Jesus) who had labelled them as sinners (9:28). With that, the Jews equated the man to the status of his healer. The result is an official separation or antithesis¹⁷¹ between the Jews (disciples of Moses)¹⁷² and the man who used to be blind (disciple of Jesus the sinner).

man of and win him over to their point of view, in an effort to get him to admit and confess that this man is a sinner. But the man stays true to what he himself saw and experienced.

168 Purposeful disobedience to the Sabbath was punishable by stoning to death. Also see the discussion above, entitled EXCURSUS: *Meaning of the Sabbath*.

169 John 8:47 (NIV)—“He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”

170 Louw and Nida (1996: *ad loc*) explain the word ἐλοιδόρησαν under sub-domain 33.393 λοιδορέω; λοιδορία, as such: “to speak in a highly insulting manner—‘to slander, to insult strongly, slander, insult.’”

171 Ridderbos (1997:3454) says: “The antithesis is intended to expose the utter inferiority of the discipleship to which the man born blind refers.”

172 See Köstenberger (2004:266) referring to 1QS 1:10 and sons of darkness.

*It is actually ironic just how much the Jews purposefully wanted to distance themselves from Jesus. With pride, they positioned themselves on the side of Moses (9:28) and the law. Their honour and status lies therein. Their identity is rooted therein. Ironically, the Jews are indeed right: They do not know where this man called Jesus comes from, and they really do not know him . . . (cf. Jn 9:29).*¹⁷³

From this point onwards, the man not only becomes an active witness to the works of God performed on him (9:30vv.), but also develops his character into a teacher. This calls to mind the interaction between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4:1–42 (as opposed to the healing of the lame man). After Jesus showed the Samaritan woman, as part of a transformative interaction, that he possesses revelatory knowledge, she became the first witness to the Samaritans (cf. 4:29—δεῦτε ἴδετε ἄνθρωπον ὃς εἶπέν μοι πάντα ὅσα ἐποίησα, μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ χριστός;). In the same manner, John presents the blind man as someone who testifies about Jesus, after Jesus performed a sign that unmistakably revealed his true identity. Köstenberger (2004:291) postulates: “Now the man born blind becomes the teacher, reasoning with the Jewish authorities on their own terms.” He defends Jesus and argues that Jesus must indeed originate with God (Köstenberger 2004:291). The fact that he does miracles makes this clear. God does not answer sinners, but only those who are god-fearing (θεοσεβῆς) and do his will (θέλημα) (9:31). If he was not from God, he would not have been able to do such wonderful things (9:33). But seeing as he does indeed do those things, he must originate with God. The healing act is therefore a sign that points to the fact that Jesus is an agent sent by God.

The Jews’ harsh reaction to his testimony were almost unprecedented (9:34). They solemnly judged that the man was full of sin from birth (Ἐν ἁμαρτίαις σὺ ἐγεννήθης ὅλος) and, without any hesitation, casted him out (ἐξέβαλον)¹⁷⁴ of the temple. The Jews could not deal with the truth of the man’s testimony. That is why they would rather remove him from the inner circle than to deal with that truth. Köstenberger (2004:292) is correct when he states that this behaviour anticipates the rejection of Jesus, which ultimately culminates in his crucifixion.

Even though Jesus totally healed the man and stated that the cause of the man’s illness was not attributable to his sins, the Jews still rejected the man. Pilch (2000) points out that when one deals with a cultural perspective on “healing”, one must keep in mind that the healing process involves and

173 See *b. Yoma* 4a and the discussion in Köstenberger (2004:290–291n59).

174 Louw and Nida (1996: *ad loc*) explains under sub-domain 15.44 ἐκβάλλω: “to cause to go out or leave, often, but not always, involving force—‘to send away, to drive out, to expel.’” Kittel et al. (1976: *ad loc*) say that it had to do with the “expulsion from the community, as in the case of the Jews driving out those who confess Christ.”

influences the entire socio-religious system.¹⁷⁵ Seybold and Müller (1978:38) agree and elaborate:

Heilung gilt auch dem Psalmisten als direkter Eingriff Gottes in das Leben. Als wunder gleichsam kann der Vorgang zwar bezeichnet (*Verbum rp'*) oder benannt werden. Als Faktum steht er aber so sehr ausserhalb jeder eigenen Verfügung, dass kaum Vorstellungen darüber entwickelt werden. Insofern wird er zum Modell einer göttlichen Intervention überhaupt. Was verfügbar ist and dem Heilungsvorgang, sind die Implikationen und Konsequenzen religiöser und Sozialer Art. Dafür nun standen institutionelle Hilfen bereit, den Genesenen kultisch zu rehabilitieren und dadurch sozial zu integrieren. Der Genesene machte sich wohl im allgemeinen auf, am Heiligtum seine offenbar im Schuld-Strafe-Denkssystem gefährdete oder verlorene Integrität wieder zu gewinnen und öffentlich bestätigen zu lassen.

SEYBOLD AND MÜLLER 1978:38

In the context of a group-orientated society, healing is not just a biological affair. It is primarily a socio-religious event. The fact that the individual is biologically healed does not necessarily mean that he or she will enjoy socio-religious or holistic healing. Hence, the question becomes whether or not the socio-religious representatives will acknowledge and accept this new life and its resultant potentialities.¹⁷⁶

This is a very important and relevant question. John 9:34 clearly says that the Pharisees, as representatives of the socio-religious system, cast the man out. This means that in this instance, socio-religious healing did not take place. The man may not be blind anymore, but he remains a socio-religious outcast. In this case, optimal socio-religious healing apparently did not take place, but, as we will see in the next passage, optimal eschatological healing did indeed occur—but on the level of restoration that only God can offer. *The man might have been rejected by the socio-religious system, but he is taken in by Jesus and incorporated into God's family (cf. 1:12).*

175 The phrase “curing of a disease” expresses the bio-medical Western context and understanding of the curative process. In contrast to the Cultural model, betterment takes place if and when control has been gained over the person's biological pathology. It is not a top priority, under the Western bio-medical model, to enquire into the socio-religious implications of betterment.

176 This is a very relevant question. In John 9:34, the representatives of the socio-religious system ban the man, which means that socio-religious healing did not take place.

5.2.6 *An Exegetical Study of John 9:35–41. The Man's Testimony: The Blind See and those who See are Blind*

John 9:35–38

35 Ἦκουσεν Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἐξέβαλον αὐτὸν ἔξω καὶ εὐρών αὐτὸν εἶπεν, Σὺ πιστεύεις εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου; 36 ἀπεκρίθη ἐκεῖνος καὶ εἶπεν, Καὶ τίς ἐστιν, κύριε, ἵνα πιστεύσω εἰς αὐτόν; 37 εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Καὶ ἑώρακας αὐτὸν καὶ ὁ λαλῶν μετὰ σοῦ ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν. 38 ὁ δὲ ἔφη, Πιστεύω, κύριε· καὶ προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ.¹⁷⁷

Jesus heard that the man was cast out (ἐξέβαλον), and when He found him (εὐρών), he asked him: Do you believe (πιστεύεις) in the Son of man¹⁷⁸ (εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου)? (9:35). The man answered: Who is He, Lord,¹⁷⁹ so that (ἵνα) I may believe (πιστεύσω) in Him? (9:36).

According to Schnackenburg (1980:253), Jesus is here intentionally leading the man to comprehensive faith in Him.¹⁸⁰ Jesus is the 'light' of everyone who believes (12:35–36) and "Jesus intends to give the man not just sight, but also the 'light of life'" (Schnackenburg 1980:253). Indeed, Jesus himself is the 'light' that gives life (8:12). Accordingly, it is clear that healing, 'light' and life are all related in this context.

177 Translation (KJV): "³⁵ Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, dost thou believe on the Son of God? ³⁶ He answered and said, who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? ³⁷ And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. ³⁸ And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him."

178 Schnackenburg (1980:253–254) illuminates our understanding of the term Son of Man in this passage by reading it against the background of 12:31–36. In his view, Jesus is not in this case alluding to the Jewish expectation of the Son of Man. In Jewish thought, this figure was "a heavenly bringer of salvation in the future," who was probably only known in certain (apocalyptic) circles (1980:253). Jesus asks the man about his faith in the *present* Son of Man. John does link the title Son of Man to the One who will judge (9:39; See also 12:31), but this is not the dominant motif. In John, the title's primary function is to draw all people unto himself (12:32).

179 Carson (1991:376) and Morris (1995:439) think that John is intentionally trying to communicate something with the wordplay in 9:36 and 9:38. Barrett (1978:364), on the other hand, does not think that John is intentionally trying to create something meaningful with his wordplay on *kurios* (*kurie* in 9:36 and Lord in 9:38).

180 Schnackenburg (1980:252–253) says: "Jesus, hearing of the man's exclusion, takes responsibility for him, since he will not reject anyone the Father brings to him (6:38). . . . He calls by name everyone who belongs to his flock. Now therefore Jesus seeks the man out with the intension of leading him to full faith."

Jesus answers the man and reveal himself to the man by saying: “You have seen Him (ὥραξας); and He who is talking to you, it is Him!” (9:37). With the (καὶ . . . καὶ) construction, Jesus enables the man to see him for who He is (See Ridderbos 1997:347). The perfect-tense ὥραξας¹⁸¹ describes an experience that reaches into the present (cf. 14:7,9; 20:29), but that has been completed (Köstenberger 2004:294). The man who used to be blind now sees Jesus standing in front of him. According to Schnackenburg (1980:254), the cautious expression ἐκείνός still serves as a direct call to faith.

The man then declared (ἔφη):¹⁸² “I believe (Πιστεύω),¹⁸³ Lord!” And He started worshipping (προσεκύνησεν)¹⁸⁴ Him (9:38).¹⁸⁵ The man here confesses his faith in Jesus (See Carson 1991:375). The sincerity and intensity of the man’s experience is described in vivid terminology: “he throws himself to the ground in front of Jesus and does him reverence” (Schnackenburg 1980:254).¹⁸⁶

Now, the man is not only able to see biologically, but also spiritually.¹⁸⁷ Schnelle (1998:174) is therefore correct in stating: “Der Blindgeborene ist in einem doppelten Sinn sehend geworden: Er erhielt nicht nur sein Augenlicht, sondern erkannte darüber hinaus, dass Jesus παρὰ θεοῦ ist, und glaubte an ihn.” Jesus’ primary motive behind performing acts of healing is therefore not just to offer people biological and socio-religious life possibilities. Rather, Jesus primarily performs acts of healing to offer people eschatological life possibilities within the family of God. In the eyes of the Jews, the man might be a sinner, but in the eyes of Jesus, he is a child of God (cf. 1:12; 3:3, 16). Hence, the man looks different within the framework of the ὕδν. He has not only

181 Verb: Perfect Indicative, Active of ὁράω. The imperfect indicates a matter that has been completed in the past. This is helpful, since the man had already seen Jesus, but had not yet fully seen Him on a spiritual level. Ridderbos (1997:349) is therefore correct in remarking that, only later on, the man would see on more than one level, both physically and spiritually.

182 Verb: Imperfect, Indicative, Active of φημί.

183 Verb: Present, Indicative, Active of πιστεύω.

184 Verb: Aorist, Indicative, Active of προσκυνέω.

185 Schnackenburg (1980:254) argues that this confession differs from other confessions in John where the construct “You are . . .” plus Christological title appears (cf. 1:49; 6:69; 11:27; 20:28). The reason for this difference is that, in this instance, the man is simply confirming Jesus’ own testimony about Himself, i.e. that He truly is the Son of Man.

186 Usually, the word προσεκύνησεν, with its declensions, is used in contexts where the worship of God is discussed (cf. 4:20–24; 12:20).

187 Schnackenburg (1980:254) says that the man gained his sight on two levels: physically and spiritually.

been restored physically, but also spiritually and in the eyes of God. Even if the man is rejected by the socio-religious system, the family of God offers him a new social network. In his contact with Jesus and through his sincere faith and acceptance of Jesus, he received the privilege to be called a child of God (1:12). Consequently, this story does not only reflect upon a mere act of biological healing; Theologically, it is also linked to the concepts of *faith*, *knowledge* and *life*. It is clear that there exists a link between this particular act of healing and the gift of *eternal life*. *The healing act becomes the vehicle, knowledge and faith the key, and eternal life the end destination.*

In the Gospel, the miracles of Jesus point to who He is and where He comes from (5:36; 10:25; Wengst 2000:1.206–207). It provides knowledge and insight into who Jesus truly is, it serves as signs of the salvation Jesus brings (9:1; 39; 6:23) and it leads people to genuine faith (10:38; 12:37; 20:30). Naturally, Jesus is more than the signs He carries out (See Ridderbos 1997:349). Jesus himself is the miracle that comes from God; the bread of Life (6:35); the resurrection and the life (11:25); the 'light' of the world (9:35) and the good shepherd who wants to grant people life in abundance (10:10).¹⁸⁸ Wengst (2000:1.207) is correct when he notes: "Die Legitimation Jesu liegt in der Selbstevidenz der Verkündigung."

John 9:39–41

39 καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Εἰς κρίμα ἐγὼ εἰς τὸν κόσμον τοῦτον ἦλθον, ἵνα οἱ μὴ βλέποντες βλέπωσιν καὶ οἱ βλέποντες τυφλοὶ γένωνται.⁴⁰ Ἦκουσαν ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων ταῦτα οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ ὄντες καὶ εἶπον αὐτῷ, Μὴ καὶ ἡμεῖς τυφλοὶ ἐσμεν; 41 εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Εἰ τυφλοὶ ᾗτε, οὐκ ἂν εἶχτε ἀμαρτίαν· νῦν δὲ λέγετε ὅτι Βλέπομεν, ἡ ἀμαρτία ὑμῶν μένει.¹⁸⁹

188 Ridderbos (1997:177) states that the miracles of Jesus are inextricably linked to his mission, witness (5:36), salvation (9:1, 39) and the manner in which he leads people to faith (and life) (20:30–31). Jesus is the true (new) temple (2:21), the place where the proper worshipping of the Father takes place (4:23); Through Jesus, man meets God (6:20, 29; 14:9–10; 20:28). See also Schnackenburg (1980:254).

189 Translation (KJV): "39 And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. 40 And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, are we blind also? 41 Jesus said unto them, if ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, we see; therefore your sin remaineth."

In John 9:39, Jesus pronounces: “As judgment (κρίμα) I came into this world, so that those who do not see, may see (οἱ μὴ βλέποντες βλέπωσιν), and those who see (οἱ βλέποντες), may become blind (τυφλοὶ γένωνται).”

In other words, it is clear that the rhetoric and argumentation of the court case ultimately ends in a negative verdict regarding the unbelieving Jews’ spiritual state of being. The Jews cast the man out, even though he is the one who, in all fairness, argued his case correctly and truthfully (cf. 3:3). In the end, this proves, within the rhetoric of the court case, who is actually blind and who not. The Jews argue that they are not blind (cf. 9:40 ἤκουσαν ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων ταῦτα οἱ μετ’ αὐτοῦ ὄντες καὶ εἶπον αὐτῷ· μὴ καὶ ἡμεῖς τυφλοὶ ἐσμεν;), but Jesus’ counter-argument proves and illustrates their blindness (cf. 9:41 εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· εἰ τυφλοὶ ἦτε, οὐκ ἂν εἶχετε ἁμαρτίαν· νῦν δὲ λέγετε ὅτι βλέπομεν, ἡ ἁμαρτία ὑμῶν μένει). In terms of their relationship with God, they are actually the ones who are sick, spiritually blind and dead. This is an important social element that becomes highlighted at the end of chapter 9’s rhetoric. In Johannine thought, man’s relationship with God is spiritually linked to the image of infirmity or, in this case, blindness. Unbelievers are spiritually sick—they are blind. However, when people are spiritually ‘healed’ in John, their spiritual blindness is healed.

Schnackenburg (1980:255) says: “Since the man has now become sighted in a double sense Jesus makes a profound statement based on this symbolism.” Ridderbos (1997:350) agrees and notices: “Here, of course, reference to those that are ‘blind’ or can ‘see’ is metaphorical.” With this latter statement, Ridderbos means that the purpose of the coming of Jesus (as Light) to the world was not restricted to the healing of biological or physical blindness, but was precisely aimed at the healing of spiritual blindness. He continues: “For blindness is not limited to the body. One can gain physical sight and still remain blind (cf. 5:14).” This illustrates that the healing acts of Jesus in John should not only be understood as physical or biological healing. *John allows for a broader understanding of the healing acts of Jesus to include spiritual healing as well.* This leads to the implicit understanding that Jesus’ interaction with the “broken” Samaritan woman could also be seen as an act of healing, because Jesus offered her qualitative life as well, and she also came to faith in him. With that, her spiritual blindness was also healed. The interaction between Jesus and the Samaritan woman can therefore also be viewed as a spiritual healing act.

According to John’s Gospel, God’s eschatological judgment (κρίμα) has already realised as a result of the coming of Jesus to the world (3:17–19). The incarnation of Jesus gave rise to a giant magnetic field in the world and people are positioned on either the positive or the negative pole thereof

(Hays 1996:149).¹⁹⁰ During an interaction of transformation, or meeting with Jesus, judgment already takes place—*believers* are separated from *non-believers* (See Ridderbos 1997:351).¹⁹¹ Those who believe are “enlightened” and have already moved across from a deadly existence to a lively state of being (cf. 5:24).¹⁹² Those who faithlessly reject Jesus, are *spiritually blind* (9:39–41) and occupy an *existential state of death and spiritual brokenness* (12:40) and have already been judged (9:39)¹⁹³ (Hays 1996:150).¹⁹⁴ Köstenberger correctly states that: “There is no cure for people who reject the only cure there is . . .” (cf. Barrett 1978:366; See Bultmann 1971:341–342) “. . . and no hope for those who are wise in their own eyes . . .” (cf. Pr 26:12).

Jesus is the ‘light’ of the world (8:12), who opens/restores/enlightens people’s spiritual eyes (9:39) and saves them from a deadly existence in spiritual ‘darkness’ (5:24) by granting them eschatological life in abundance (10:10) within the family of God (1:12; 3:16).

John 9:40 reads: “And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, are we blind also?” Although the Pharisees heard (“ἤκουσαν”) the words Jesus spoke, they weren’t really listening.¹⁹⁵ The Pharisees turn the implicit accusation against them around and change it into a challenging question to Jesus. Jesus answered them: “If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.” (9:41). This answer offered by Jesus is loaded with meaning.¹⁹⁶ In the first place,

190 Schnackenburg (1980:255) agrees with Hays: “This judgment leads to a division among people, and this factor is present here as in 3:19.”

191 See Bultmann (1955:38).

192 Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:196) are right in saying: “The theme of light and darkness, day and night (vv. 9–10), replicates the larger concern about life and death in this chapter.” Köstenberger (2004:188–189), in his discussion of 5:24, indicates that those who hear must believe, but doesn’t make enough of the existential state of the “death” non-believers occupy and believers’ consequent move toward ‘life’.

193 Schnackenburg (1980:255) says: “If anyone rejects the one sent by God, their unbelief becomes a judgement on them through their own guilt (3:18b; 12:48).” This, however, does not contradict God’s love and justice toward the world (cf. 3:17; 8:15; 12:42).

194 Schnackenburg (1980:255) says: “The man born blind has not just received the sight of his eyes, but sight in his believing heart, and those who outwardly see; in reality they are blind and are losing their ability to perceive spiritual and divine realities.”

195 Schnackenburg (1980:256) points out that the metaphorical use of ‘spiritual blindness’ was not a strange term in Judaism (cf. Is 42:16, 18vv.; 43:8). As such, the Pharisees knew all too well what Jesus was implying, which is why they asked Him if they were also blind.

196 See Schnackenburg (1980:256).

the answer implies something of the human responsibility to choose to be either for or against Jesus (15:22). The hardening of people's hearts is depicted in the context of 12:37–43. In the second place, the answer is aimed at opening the Pharisees' eyes for their own existential state and status before God. He lets them know that their own faithlessness (9:29–33) leads to more than just individual sins, but to a sinful existential state, characterised by death and resulting judgment. Thirdly, Jesus implies that the Jews are caught up in their own arrogance, and closed off for the revelation of God through Jesus. In their haughtiness, they use God's glory to justify their own position (9:24; 16:2); but their haughtiness causes spiritual blindness (5:40–44; 8:49; 12:43). The Gospel views faithlessness and the rejection of God (Jesus) and his people as sin (8:21; 15:22,24; 16:9; 19:11) (cf. Köstenberger 2004:258; Barrett 1978:340; Carson 1991:341; Brown 1966:350; Schnackenburg 1990:2.197; Morris 1995:395).

As agent of God, Jesus represents the Father on earth (cf. 5:17–18; 10:30; See Schlatter 1948:242; Beasley-Murray 1999:174; Stibbe 1993:118; Burge 2000:296). Whatever is done to the Son, is also done to the Father (Ridderbos 1997:371; Carson 1991:394). Those who were involved with Jesus in a transformative interaction and still remain faithless, illustrate thereby that they reject and hate the Father (15:22,24). Köstenberger (2004:189) is correct in stating the following on the basis of John 5:24: "For John, hearing, like seeing, ought to be coupled with a believing response . . ." It is exactly for this reason that the Jews have no excuse, which is why they remain caught up in a state of existential 'darkness' and death (cf. 5:24; Schnackenburg 1990.2:213). They choose to stand on the side of the devil, the father of death¹⁹⁷ and deceit, and against the truth (8:44; cf. Carson 1991:353; Ridderbos 1997:315; Haenchen 1980:371). Hence, the question becomes: 'who or what represents the origin of a person's existence?' (cf. Lincoln 2005:272; cf. also Ehrman, Fee & Homes 1992). Those who are anchored in Christ (cf. Jn 15) are the very same people who know the Shepherd's voice and follow Him (cf. Jn 10:14; Wengst 2000:1.384–385).

5.3 Chapter Summary. Representation of Reality: Who is Really Blind?

Just like the other healing narratives in John, this narrative is a *semeion* that points toward a 'greater' spiritual truth: that Jesus, as the 'light' of the world, heals the spiritually blind (Jn 9:39). Unbelievers are 'spiritually blind' and 'sick/

197 The expression ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς probably refers to the fall of man (cf. Köstenberger 2004:266; Barrett 1978:349; Beasley-Murray 1999:135; Ridderbos 1997:315). Just like God created life at the beginning, the devil was a murderer from the beginning.

broken' and in need of spiritual 'restoration' (See Schnackenburg 1980:255). Ridderbos (1997:350) is therefore correct when he notes: "For blindness is not limited to the body. One can gain physical sight and still remain blind (cf. 5:14)." As mentioned above, *this illustrates the important point that the healing acts of Jesus should not only be understood as physical or biological healing. John allows for a broader understanding of the healing acts of Jesus to also include 'spiritual healing'.* This is most clearly seen in John 9:40–41. When people harden their hearts, as we see in 12:37–43, they make themselves guilty of sin, and illustrate their 'spiritual sickness'. One of the reasons Jesus was sent to this world, was to 'heal' or 'restore' the spiritual sight of people. Therefore, there is no place for faithlessness (9:29–33) or haughtiness (9:24; 16:2). In the author of John's mind, the latter is simply a result of spiritual blindness (5:40–44; 8:49; 12:43).¹⁹⁸

198 This kind of creative linguistic use of terms like those 'being blind' and 'those who believe and see' are one of the ways the early Christians drew boundaries between insiders and outsiders (See also Kok, Nicklas, Roth & Hays [eds] 2014:1–20).

The Restoration of Lazarus: An Exegetical Study of John 11:1–44

Many scholars are of the opinion that the Gospel according to John has *only three acts of healing*. Pilch (2000:119) is one example. He postulates: “Terms for healing appear twenty-five times in Luke, seventeen times in Matthew, and eight times in Mark. By contrast, there are only three healing stories in the entire Gospel of John (4:46–54; 5:1–20; 9:1–41).” Other scholars, like Howard (2001:185–190; See also Wilkinson 1998:5) do indeed classify the raising of Lazarus as a culturally-defined act of healing.¹ I agree with Wilkinson’s (1998:5) broader understanding of the terms ‘healing’ and ‘illness’:²

Another aspect of our use of the word healing in this book is that we include three categories of the restoration to normality within this scope. These are healing of the body, the casting out of demons and the raising of the dead. Although they are separate categories, they are all examples of that restoration of human beings to that wholeness of being which we call health.

WILKINSON 1998:5

The raising of Lazarus should certainly be viewed as an act of healing, seeing as it involved morbidity (11:4), which eventually ended in death, but was subsequently restored to normalcy.

1 Compare the other gospels’ healing wonders where dead people were raised: the daughter of Jairus in Matt 9:18–26; Mark 5:41; Luke 8:40–56, as well as Luke 7:11–17 that deals with the widow’s son.

2 Craffert (1999:27) notes: “When talking about illness, it is important to distinguish between different kinds of illnesses as well as the nature of such illnesses.” He then refers to research on human illnesses and the experiences thereof: “1). Only 10–20% of all reported illnesses are life-threatening. 2) The remaining 80–90% of illnesses can be divided into three categories: a. *Psycho-somatic illnesses*: Illnesses with no identifiable organic or biological cause (around 50%), b. *Chronic illnesses that are not life-threatening*; c. *Self-inhibiting physical illnesses* like influenza, malaria and other parasitic infections.”

6.1 The Death of Lazarus as Delayed Intervention

The healing narrative in John 4:43–54 tells the story of the nobleman's son, who was so sick that it was feared, should Jesus not react quickly, he would die soon (cf. 4:47, ἤμελλεν γὰρ ἀποθνήσκειν). The *specific type of illness* was therefore *bio-hazardous and life-threatening* and could have ended in death, had intervention been delayed (cf. 4:49 κατὰβηθι πρὶν ἀποθανεῖν τὸ παιδίον μου). Hence, *death is a natural consequence of serious, life-threatening illnesses and is part of the natural process of those illnesses*. Blank (1981:260) remarks in this regard that: “Krankheit ist immer ein Vorgang, der in Biblischer Sicht den Menschen in den Bannkreis des Todes, in Todesnähe bringt.” In the ancient world, illness was commonly associated with the category of death. If and when intervention was late or unsuccessful, death, as part of the natural development of serious illnesses, was the end result. In other words, Craffert (1999:16–17) is correct when he says: “The experience of illness and pain was an everyday phenomenon and part of life. The results of either a disease or an injury were often carried for life and often resulted in early death.”

If one should provide a systematic exposition of the development of serious or life-threatening illnesses and the normal healing process, it would look something like this:

1. An individual finds him or herself in some state of illness with certain symptoms;
2. A prognosis is made within a certain cultural perspective (see Craffert 1999:42).
3. Serious illnesses inhibit normal biological functioning and lead to socio-religious brokenness—as opposed to wholeness. This affects an Eastern-Mediterranean individual's “*being*”;
4. Within a cultural perspective, this results in a socio-religious deconstruction of individual status;
5. If intervention fails (to take place), symptoms worsen and serious illnesses end in death;
6. If intervention happens in good time and is successful, symptoms improve and the individual is healed, repaired, restored and made whole;
7. Socio-religiously speaking, it leads to the reconstruction of the individual's status as someone who is whole and pure again.

Lazarus had a life-threatening illness. The death of Lazarus can therefore be seen as the natural consequence of an illness that ultimately ended in death because the intervention or healing miracle failed to occur timeously

or successfully. However, Jesus claims that this illness will not result in death, because he implicitly knows that the intervention will happen soon.

Against Pilch (2000) and other scholars, I agree with Howard (2001) that the Lazarus-story narrates a miracle of healing. The reasons being that the term illness figures in the story and that the intervention or healing procedure does eventually take place, resulting in the healing, reparation and restoration of the loss and brokenness introduced by the illness and eventual death.

The main purpose of this chapter is to study the theological role of the healing miracle in John 11:1–44.³ Not only does this chapter (John 11) play an integral theological role within the context of the Gospel as a whole, but the semantics of the concepts ‘illness’, ‘healing’, and ‘restoration’ (of ‘life’) also figure prominently.⁴ Howard (2001:185) effectively explains the motivation behind studying John 11 as a healing narrative in the Johannine context:

Nonetheless, the story is an account of an event which more than any of the other healing stories has become so woven into the fabric of the theological development that it is virtually impossible to separate the underlying tradition from the Johannine theology it is designed to set out.

HOWARD 2001:185

It has been and remains a feature of this book to contemplate the relationship between healing and the creation of life, as well as existential possibilities. In the context of Lazarus’s illness, which eventually leads to his death, the concept of life strongly presents itself (cf. 11:25). If the first section (John 1–12) of the writing is considered, the miracles and transformative, life-creating abilities of Jesus reach a culminating theological pinnacle with the Lazarus-story. Here, Jesus is depicted as the resurrection and the life (11:25), a cardinal theological motif that is being developed and that will culminate in the resurrection of Jesus. In the course of this chapter, it will be explained why this narrative should indeed be seen within its cultural perspective as a miracle of healing.⁵

3 According to Schnackenburg (1990:316), the raising of Lazarus is the “climax of all Jesus’ signs.”

4 Ridderbos (1997:383) notes: “Even from a “theological” point of view the story of the raising of Lazarus does occupy a very important place in the overall structure of the Gospel.”

5 Ridderbos (1997:381) interprets this narrative as a healing narrative. However, he mentions that some scholars are careful to assume direct knowledge of the life of Jesus on the part of the Gospel writer. As such, the narrative is interpreted by them as a symbolic story or legend. Yet, other scholars are careful to support this view. According to them, the narratives where Jesus raises people from the dead play an essential role in the gospel (cf Mt 11:5; Lk 7:11). In my view, the raising of Lazarus from the dead plays a prominent role as far as the uniqueness

6.2 John 11 as a Healing Miracle in Cultural Perspective

John 11 is a remarkable chapter, with the terms ‘*illness*’ (ἀσθένεια); [eternal] ‘*life*’ (ζωή), ‘*death*’ (θανάτου); ‘*raising*’ [from the dead] (ἀναστήσεται); and ‘*faith*’ (πιστεύων) featuring prominently. In this healing miracle, the central themes, all of them important for the argumentation of the book, are touched upon. For this reason, chapter 11 is an all-important chapter that has to be negotiated in the course of defending the current thesis.

John 11:25–26 illustrates the relevance of the chapter with regard to the themes that have thus far featured prominently in our argumentation of the thesis: “εἶπεν αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωὴ· ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ καὶ ὁ ἀποθάνῃ ζήσεται, 26 καὶ πᾶς ὁ ζῶν καὶ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. πιστεύεις τοῦτο.”⁶

Beasley-Murray (1987:199) remarks: “Whenever the Lazarus story is discussed the question of its historicity arises.” Seeing as this issue is tangential to the concerns of the current thesis, it will not be addressed (See Beasley-Murray 1987:184vv.; Ridderbos 1997:381vv.; Carson 1991:403). Together with Ridderbos (1997:385), the text is interpreted in the following way: “Everything points rather to the understanding that here, too, the miracle is intended as confirmation of the word of Jesus’ self-disclosure earlier.” Hence, the historicity of the text will not presently be of primary importance. What will receive attention is the manner in which the Gospel writer (theologically) presents the Lazarus-story within the context of the narrative as a whole and how he presents the sign (σημεῖον) in order to fulfil his purpose with the gospel.

6.3 An Exegetical Study of John 11

6.3.1 Macro-Analysis

6.3.1.1 Positioning of the Text within the Context of the Whole

Ridderbos (1997:381) maintains that John 11–12 can be treated as a unity. These two chapters can be separated from the preceding debates between Jesus and

of the Gospel is concerned. It is directly related to the creation of existential possibilities and the conquering of death as a marginalising reality.

6 Translation of John 11:25–26 (KJV): “²⁵ Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: ²⁶ And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”.

the Jews, as well as from the narrative about the passion and death of Jesus, which commences in 13:1.⁷

Structurally speaking, chapters 11–12 can be divided up into 11:1–54 and 11:55–12:50. Since 11:1 introduces new characters and a new setting, this chapter is clearly separate from that which precedes it. Chapter 11:54 constitutes the conclusion of the previous scene and introduces a transition to a new setting (Ephraim). In turn, 11:55–57 represents the transition to a new *setting*, where the dramatic events surrounding Passover kicks off. John 11:1–54 deals with the miracle of healing, where Lazarus is raised from the dead and receives life. This miracle story is the culminating narrative in service of the Gospel's central motif, namely that Jesus gives life. John 11:55–12:50 falls within the context of the tension build-up between Jesus and the Jews—a tension that ultimately ends in the death and resurrection of Jesus.⁸

Schnackenburg (1990:317) breaks the story up into the following constituent parts:

1. The setting or scene is painted: the news about the death of Lazarus (1–5);
2. The trip from Judea to Bethany: Jesus' conversation with his disciples (6–16);

7 Culpepper (1983:94), in his discussion on the deployment of the gospel's plot, argues that John 11 develops the thematic of life and death. After his conflict with the Jews, which reaches a climax in chapter 8, and his movement away from the Jewish socio-religious centre, he returns to restore Lazarus to life. He does this in spite of Thomas's prophetic warning that Jesus is moving straight to his death. Jesus declares that Lazarus's illness will not result in death, but in the glorification of God. Jesus has authority over life and death. For Jesus, death has lost its sting and is nothing more than sleep (11:11–14). Death is no longer the final marginalising reality on earth. Indeed, Jesus himself is the essential embodiment of resurrection and life (11:25–26). According to Culpepper (1983:94), the stone in front of the grave's entrance symbolises death and the division or marginalisation it brings between the living and the dead. Even though Jesus became emotional, he reached back to his Father in this deadly situation, thereby triumphing over the situation and illustrating that he possesses authority over life and death. Some believe in Jesus, but the Jews immediately start planning his death, since, in their view, it had become a matter of national security (11:48–50). According to Culpepper (1983:94), chapter 12 is a transitional chapter. It brings the public ministry of Jesus to an end and prepares the situation for his arrest and death. Through his death, he will ultimately draw all people unto himself (12:27–32). Culpepper (1983:97) concludes that the gospel's plot revolves around faith and faithlessness over whether Jesus is the Son of God, who was sent by him, or not.

8 Beasley-Murray (1987:186) says: "The Evangelist presents it as the last of the signs of Jesus, which brought to a climax all that preceded it and precipitated his own death and resurrection."

3. In Bethany. Jesus' conversation with Martha (17–27);
4. Jesus and Mary (28–32);
5. The visit to and opening of the grave (33–41a);
6. The raising of Lazarus (41b–44);
7. The Jews decide to kill Jesus. Jesus returns to Ephraim (45–54).

6.3.1.2 Analysis of the Build-up of the Text: Summary⁹

According to the Analysis of the text's build-up, the relationship between the constituent parts looks as follows:

TABLE 9 *Division of John 11:1–44*

Cluster	Colon	Theme
A	1–7 (vv. 1–6)	News about Lazarus's illness
B	8–17 (vv. 7–16)	The conversation between Jesus and the disciples
C	18–27 (vv. 17–27)	The conversation between Jesus and Martha
D	28–42 (vv. 28–37)	The conversation between Jesus and Mary
E	43–55 (vv. 38–44)	The Raising of Lazarus

The pericope is clearly made up of five structured scenes. The introduction is painted in Cluster A (cola 1–7) and directly followed by three conversations (Clusters B–D; cola 8–17; 18–27; 28–42) between Jesus and other characters in the narrative (the disciples, Martha and Mary respectively). The miracle only happens in the last section (Cluster E; cola 43–55). The narrative's unique composition indicates that the author firstly developed his theological message by means of the three conversations and then brought it to fruition with the miracle (See Contra Bultmann 1971:409).¹⁰

9 The Analysis of this text's deployment can be found in the Addendum. Cf. also Hwang (2004:172:177) for a sound narrative study, which includes both an Analysis of the text's deployment and a structure-analysis of the pericope from whom I have drawn here.

10 Bultmann (1971:409) does not view the Lazarus narrative as a culminating act of healing. However, see also Salier (2004:129) and other scholars who argue convincingly that the Lazarus story should indeed be interpreted as a culminating act of healing, at least within the confines of Jesus' public ministry to the world, which unfolds during the first 12 chapters (See Beasley-Murray 1987).

6.3.2 *A Detailed Analysis of John 11:1–44*

6.3.2.1 An Exegetical Study of John 11:1–6

John 11:1–3

Ἦν δέ τις ἀσθενῶν, Λάζαρος ἀπὸ Βηθανίας, ἐκ τῆς κώμης Μαρίας καὶ Μάρθας τῆς ἀδελφῆς αὐτῆς. 2 Ἦν δὲ Μαρία ἢ ἀλείψασα τὸν κύριον μύρω καὶ ἐκμάξασα τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ταῖς θριξίν αὐτῆς, ἧς ὁ ἀδελφὸς Λάζαρος ἡσθένει. 3 ἀπέστειλαν οὖν αἱ ἀδελφαὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν λέγουσαι, Κύριε, ἴδε ὃν φιλεῖς ἀσθενεῖ.¹¹

Introduction and Background

Tension-wise, chapter 10 ends on a high note, with Jesus just barely escaping arrest, but fleeing successfully. Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:193) make this interesting comment: “[J]ust as Jesus’ career opened with a wedding in Galilee, it now closes with a funeral near Jerusalem.” The Lazarus-story prepares the reader for a correct interpretation of Jesus’ own death and resurrection (Salier 2004:139–141).

As a result of the request by Martha and Mary that Jesus tends to Lazarus,¹² Jesus now moves in a southerly direction—a dangerous prospect (Carson 1991:405).¹³ Here, Jesus finds himself only a few miles outside of Jerusalem, the

11 Translation (κβν): “¹ Now a certain *man* was sick, *named* Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. ² (It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) ³ Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.”

12 Collins (1990:25–26) notes that the name Lazarus appears only here in John and in Luke 16:19–31. In both cases, the name is used in a literary context that deals with ‘resurrection’ from the dead. The name Lazarus derives from El-azar, which can be translated as ‘God helps’. Symbolically, Lazarus could allude to the disciples as followers of Jesus. Within the narrative context, Jesus loved Lazarus (11:3, 5, 36) and called him his friend (11:11). The text is silent about whether or not Lazarus had the correct faith, in the Johannine sense of the word. The text does, however, say that other people started believing as a result of the raising of Lazarus (cf. 12:11). As such, the Lazarus-event takes place within the context of faith and also evokes the element of faith. Hence, we may argue that faith plays an important role within the greater context of the Lazarus story.

13 See Schnackenburg (1990:317–320) for a Literary analysis that takes the tradition history into account. According to Collins (1990:26), early tradition told the Lazarus story as a miracle story. Important elements came to the fore in this narrative: Jesus’ delay (11:6); The “four-day motif” (11:7,39), alluding to Jewish tradition that people’s spirits only vacated the area around the grave after four days. This motif illustrates the reality of Lazarus’ death. This motif is also important for the current thesis. It illustrates the fact that Lazarus

centre of Jewish opposition.¹⁴ Scholars point out that the Bethany in view here must be separated from the Bethany in John 1:28 and 10:40–42 (Köstenberger 2004:325). The Bethany currently referred to, lies on the eastern side of the Mount of Olives, less than two miles from Jerusalem.¹⁵ Barrett (1978:391) says: “It seems clear that John regarded this visit to Bethany as the cause and beginning of the final and decisive journey to Jerusalem.” The comment in 11:2 “ἦν δὲ Μαριάμ ἡ ἀλείψασα τὸν κύριον μύρω καὶ ἐκμάξασα τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ταῖς θριξίν αὐτῆς” refers to the anointing in 12:1–8 (Ridderbos 1997:386–387).¹⁶ According to Schnackenburg (1990:332), it is clear that the story of Jesus being anointed by Mary was well-known within Christian circles (See also Barrett 1978:390; *Contra* Carson 1991:405).¹⁷

Crisis Situation: The Illness and Eventual Death of Lazarus

The sisters of Lazarus send (ἀπέστειλαν) a message to Jesus to let him know that his friend, whom he loves¹⁸ (φιλεῖς), has fallen ill (ἀσθενεῖ) (cf. 11:3).¹⁹ Later on in the narrative, it is revealed that Lazarus’s morbidity was rather developed

experienced true socio-religious marginalisation, to the extent that he was dead for four days and that every possibility for his spirit to still be present at the grave was erased. As such, Lazarus is truly dead and separated from any potential life possibilities. In this context, Jesus shows, in no uncertain terms, that he has the might to recreate existential possibilities that had been lost. Where bleakness and death rule, Jesus can still create life. In early Christianity, this narrative was possibly applied to offer hope in the face of the delayed *parousia*.

- 14 Carson (1991:405) notes: “Thus in transparent irony it is his quest to bring his dead friend back to life that precipitates the Sanhedrin decision against him (vv. 45ff.) and therefore his own execution.”
- 15 Schnackenburg (1990:321).
- 16 Beasley-Murray. (1987:186) opines: “The sentence is commonly viewed as an explanatory gloss by an editor (cf. 4:2; 6:22–23). There are, however, other remarks that disrupt the narrative flow, but that could just as well be from the hand of the Gospel writer (e.g. 11:5, 13, 18, 30).” See also Schnackenburg (1990:322).
- 17 Malina & Rohrbaugh (1998:195) note: “As often in this document, the author presupposes here that his audience knows the story of Jesus.”
- 18 Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:179) point out that Lazarus is here presented as a friend of Jesus, which places him on an even social keel with Jesus. They also point out that the relationship between Lazarus and Jesus was indicative of love. It is this love that also binds the Jesus group together (cf. John 10:14–18).
- 19 Burge (2000:312) notices the interesting fact that the sisters knew exactly where to find Jesus. This could be an indication of the closeness of the relationship between Jesus and this particular family. Supporting evidence is the comment that Jesus loved Lazarus and the overall comfort with which Jesus and the sisters interacted.

and that he was ‘deadly’ ill (Köstenberger 2004:325).²⁰ In no way does Lazarus occupy a position of ideal existential possibilities. On the contrary, he and his family are in the midst of a crisis—a situation characterised by disorientation.²¹ Salier (2004:129) notices this and says: “The Story of Lazarus is characterized by named people in a situation of distress that would be familiar to any reader in the ancient world.”²² The effect of the colourful depiction of this scene is that the audience is drawn into the heart of the story, which ultimately enables them to experience the healing act convincingly as a σημεῖον (See Frey 1994a:257–263). I agree with Salier (2004:131) that the category of death clearly and prominently moves to the foreground in the Lazarus-story. The theme of death came to bear already in 11:4, when Jesus declared that “αὕτη ἡ ἀσθενεία οὐκ ἔστιν πρὸς θάνατον”, but that it would ultimately lead to the “δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ”. The theme of death crops up again in 11:8, when the disciples note “Ραββί, νῦν ἐξήτουν σε λιθάσαι οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, καὶ πάλιν ὑπάγεις ἐκεῖ.” Subsequently, when Jesus goes to visit his beloved friend, he is willing to enter the danger zone, facing death, in order to give his friend life. Later on, in 15:13, it will become clear that “μείζονα ταύτης ἀγάπην οὐδεὶς ἔχει, ἵνα τις τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ θῇ ὑπὲρ τῶν φίλων αὐτοῦ”. It is the love of those he received from his Father that drives Jesus to stare death in the face for their sakes.

In the next narratological movement, Jesus reaches Bethany (11:17), where the reality of death is centre stage. The illness Lazarus suffered had led to his death. Later on, we will see that Jesus’ conversation with Martha revolved around death and what happens after you die. Salier (2004:131) is therefore correct when he points out that “The pall of death that hangs over the narrative is reinforced by Thomas who states, on behalf of the disciples, that they will go with Jesus to die with him (11:16). At the end of this first movement of the story, the presence of death has been established.” Surely, then it is against the backdrop of the reality and presence of death that the life-giving potential of Jesus is shown.

20 Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:195) rightly state that Lazarus’s illness must have been very serious. This is evinced by the fact that Lazarus’s sisters summoned Jesus. If it were not serious, they would not have gone through so much effort.

21 Salier (2004:130) goes as far as talking of a family tragedy.

22 We may agree with Frey (1994a:257–263) that the gospel was not written for an exclusively Jewish audience, but that it was also relevant for other socio-religious groups of the time, like the Greeks for example. This is already shown in 3:16 and 4:42, where all social groups are included in God’s plan of salvation. According to Salier (2004:129), this is related to Isaiah, where the whole world shares in God’s plan of redemption.

Seeing as ἀσθενεῖ is connected to the loss of existential potentialities, it can be argued that illness (ἀσθενεῖ) is the polar opposite of life (ζωή) and its resultant potentialities. Blank (1981:260) has already been quoted as saying: “Krankheit ist immer ein Vorgang, der in biblischer Sicht den Menschen in den Bannkreis des Todes, in Todesnähe bringt.” Thus, in Biblical times, illness was perceived as an existential situation indicative of the category or dimension of death. According to Kittel et al. (1976 vol 1:493), New Testament authors thought that ἀσθενεῖ was caused by:

1. Evil spirits (Mt 17:18 and esp. Lk 13:11) of
2. Sin (1 Cor 11:30; Mk 2:5; Ja 5:16; Jn 9:2).

According to Neyrey (1991:82), whenever someone was called a sick person (ἀσθενούντων),²³ the individual's socio-religious status was deconstructed to a larger or lesser extent. *As such, Lazarus wasn't suffering from a disease in the Western Biomedical sense of the word, but from an illness in cultural perspective.* The concept “illness” presupposes negative socio-religious and cultural implications. We have already shown that, according to Jewish thought, illnesses were commonly related to sin. God is a God of life, and wherever sickness is present, it is a sign that God is absent. Neyrey (1991:283) notes: “The human body constitutes one of the most important maps, for it is a microcosm of the larger social macrocosm.”²⁴ As was previously discussed, holiness and purity were connected to wholeness. Individuals with physical brokenness of whatever kind were not seen as “whole” people. That which is not whole, is unclean. Hence, impurity held clear socio-religious implications (Neyrey 1991:285).

It is important to note that the healing of Lazarus takes place within a household and that there is no mention of either his marginalisation or the possibility that he might have been impure. His two sisters are closely involved with the process and look after him in the period leading up to his death. Despite Neyrey's (1991) proposals, there are no signs in the text suggesting that Lazarus experienced socio-religious marginalisation and status deconstruction, at least not before his death. Nonetheless, it could be conceded to Neyrey (1991) that

23 Verb: Present, Participle Active, Genitive and Masculine Plural of ἀσθενέω. The same word is used in Isaiah 53:4: “αὐτὸς τὰς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν ἔλαβεν καὶ τὰς νόσους ἐβάρυσεν: Surely he hath borne our grief, and carried our sorrows (κјѵ).”

24 Neyrey (1991:283) says: “We are invited, then, to consider a map of the body which replicates the map of society.” This, of course, refers to the concentric circles that shift from less holy to more holy. The holiest point on the “map” is within the centre of the concentric system, while the least holy point is on the periphery.

socio-religious marginalisation might have played a role, but only after Lazarus had died, and was physically removed from the household context and placed in a grave. However, there are no signs in the text suggesting that Lazarus experienced socio-religious marginalisation and status deconstruction while he was still alive. It would be hard to prove Neyrey's (1991) argument from the text itself. The problem with Neyrey (1991) is that he applies a general model to all New Testament texts without negotiating the dynamics of individual texts.

John 11:4–6

4 ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν, Αὕτη ἡ ἀσθένεια οὐκ ἔστιν πρὸς θάνατον ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα δοξασθῇ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ δι' αὐτῆς. 5 ἡγάπα δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν Μάρθαν καὶ τὴν ἀδελφὴν αὐτῆς καὶ τὸν Λάζαρον. 6 ὥς οὖν ἤκουσεν ὅτι ἀσθενεῖ, τότε μὲν ἔμεινεν ἐν ᾧ ἦν τόπω δύο ἡμέρας, 7 ἔπειτα μετὰ τοῦτο λέγει τοῖς μαθηταῖς, Ἄγωμεν εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν πάλιν.²⁵

There is a logical relation between illness (ἀσθενεῖ) and death (θάνατον) in that serious illnesses (as in the case of Lazarus) leads to death, and are often related to the death-impurity category, as was argued above. Healing is related to life in that healing recreates lost (or new) life possibilities. In other words, the concepts of 'illness' and 'death', versus 'healing' and 'life', can be understood as part of the Gospel's dualistic approach:

- Illness versus Healing
- Death versus Life

Carson (1991:406) expresses the opinion that Lazarus's illness was not caused by God, but that it was used by God. Köstenberger (2004:327) picks up on the same sensitivities: "... [I]t is not that the sickness occurred *in order* for God to be glorified, but rather that it constituted an *occasion* for God's glory to be revealed." Schnackenburg (1990:322) agrees and rightly holds that Lazarus's

25 Translation (KJV): ⁴ When Jesus heard *that*, he said, this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. ⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. ⁶ When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

illness was not only an ideal opportunity to display the power of Jesus but also to reveal deeper theological truths (See Haenchen 1980:398–399).²⁶

In John 11:4, Jesus says: “Αὕτη ἡ ἀσθένεια οὐκ ἔστιν πρὸς θάνατον ἀλλ’ ὑπὲρ τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα δοξασθῇ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ δι’ αὐτῆς.”²⁷ Jesus clearly states that the illness is not moving in a direction (πρὸς) that will end in death (θάνατον), but in a direction of (ἀλλ’ ὑπὲρ τῆς) the glorification (δοξασθῇ) of the Son of God.²⁸ Haenchen (1980:398) is therefore correct when he states: “Diese Krankheit hat nicht den Tod zum Ziel; sie dient der Verherrlichung Gottes . . .” Die Krankheit wird nicht tödlich sein—aber dennoch wird Lazarus ganz tief in das Totesdunkel hinabsteigen müssen, bevor ihn Jesus auferweckt.” This means that the hope for liberation from the crisis situation is not dependent on the nature of the illness. The nature of the illness would ultimately have ended Lazarus’s life. The solution therefore lays in the nature of Jesus’ life-creating ability. The ὑπὲρ clause, which elucidates the ἵνα clause, explains that God intends to reveal himself through the activities of the Son (cf. 9:3).²⁹ The exegetical analyses of the other healing narratives clearly showed that the Son’s works are closely related to the giving of life (cf. 5:19–21). The miracle that is to follow will not only glorify (δοξασθῇ) both Father and Son, but also strengthen the faith (πιστεύσης) of those who witness (ὄψῃ) it (cf. 11:40). Beasley-Murray (1987:187) observes that this passage refers implicitly to Jesus’ own death and resurrection.³⁰ The illness and death of Lazarus, as well as his resultant healing or raising, serve as *sign* (cf. 12:18—διὰ τοῦτο [καί] ὑπήντησεν αὐτῷ ὁ ὄχλος, ὅτι ἤκουσαν τοῦτο αὐτὸν πεποιημέναι τὸ σημεῖον), illustrating that Jesus possesses power over life and death (11:25). The way in which the miracle is presented also agrees with the basic pattern in which the other σημεῖα are presented (See Salier 2004:121). The reference to the fact that many people (Πολλοί) came to

26 Barrett (1978:390) thinks that the illness created an opportunity for the Father and the Son to receive honour.

27 John 11:4 reads: “When Jesus heard *that*, he said, this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.”

28 Schnackenburg (1990:322) says: “It is not ‘unto death’; the direction in which it points (πρὸς) in God’s plan is not the darkness of death and destruction, but the hope which dawns for believers in the actions and fate of the Son of God.”

29 Carson (1991:406) is right in claiming that Jesus did not mean to say that the illness could not be fatal. Jesus meant to say that the illness would not end in death. Carson further says: “Far from it: it will end in resurrection from the dead, and that for God’s glory.”

30 Beasley-Murray. (1987:187) rightly notes that: “The Evangelist makes it plain in the course of the narrative that the end of the story of Lazarus is the death of Jesus himself . . . In the chapters that follow, the glory of God in Christ is bound up with the death and resurrection of Jesus . . .” (Cf 12:23, 27–28, 31–32; 13:31–32; 17:1).

faith (ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτόν) as a result of the raising of Lazarus (cf. 11:45), further illustrates the fact that John undoubtedly presents this miracle as a σημεῖον, as in the other cases (cf. 2:23; 4:45; 6:2, 14; 7:31).

The Relation between Illness and Death

With this σημεῖον, the logical relation between illness and death is trampled. The Jewish symbolic universe does not associate illness with the δοξασθῆναι of God. In Jewish thought, illness is associated with sin or the labour of evil spirits. By the second-temple period, the view that death was the result of Satan's initiative was generally accepted (See Köstenberger 2004:266; Wis 2:23–24; Sir 25:24; cf. Rom 5:12). In this passage, illness and death are linked to the glorification of God, ironically enough. According to Carson (1991:405), the glorification points to revelation: “If the death of Lazarus came about so that God's glory might be revealed, this particular revelation of God's glory is *so that God's Son may be glorified through it . . .*”

Tension is created by the author's comment that Jesus stayed behind at his place of lodging an extra two days (11:6).³¹ Haenchen (1980:399) correctly points out: “Äusserlich gesehen handelt Jesus lieblos.” Thus, it might have seemed like Jesus was acting without love or compassion when he postponed reacting to the sisters' urgent request to visit Lazarus. Schnackenburg (1990:324) purports: “Perhaps the evangelist intends this effect, to make it clear that Jesus' behaviour is determined by another will.” Schnackenburg is correct, of course, seeing as John unfailingly portrays Jesus as the one who is in control (cf. 18:6; 10:17–18) and who is not vulnerable to the impact of human factors on his destiny (See Haenchen 1980:518). It was argued earlier on in the book that the Son carries out the will of the Father. Whatever the Son does, he observed the Father do (cf. 5:19, 20; See Beasley-Murray 1987:76).³² The Son does nothing on his own.

31 Barrett (1978:390) argues that τότε μὲν is related and points forward to ἔπειτα μετὰ τοῦτο in the next verse (11:7). With this, attention is directed to the purposefully delayed reaction by Jesus.

32 Beasley-Murray. (1987:76) notes: “The ‘seeing’ of the Son in v 19 has its counterpart in the ‘showing’ by the Father in v 20. It is an image of the perpetual communion of the Son with the Father in his day-by-day life (*not* in his pre-existence). The source of that communion, and its illumination and direction, is the Father's love for the Son. This is to be seen in the ‘greater works’ that will be shown to the Son, and that will cause the Jews to marvel. Precisely because these works can be seen by the Jews and move them to astonishment, they must denote the greater signs that Jesus will perform in his ministry; naturally they will also point to the greater realities of the kingdom of God, which however the Jews will not be able to perceive.”

That is why Schnackenburg (1990:324) is therefore correct when he says that the Son does not react to the presumptuousness or agenda of people. Jesus reacts to the agenda and plan of God (cf. 2:4; 7:6). People wanted Jesus to heal Lazarus. God wanted to illustrate by means of raising the dead that Jesus had the ability to give life (11:25). That also explains the delayed reaction to the healing act. Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:195) are correct when they note that the narrative itself explicates the reasons for the delayed reaction:

- To illustrate that Jesus has authority over life and death (Jesus arrives on the fourth day)
- To glorify God by raising Lazarus³³
- To glorify Jesus³⁴
- The four-day motif anticipates and points to Jesus' own death and resurrection from the dead (20:1)
- Schnackenburg (1990:324) contends that Jesus' delayed reaction was also meant to strengthen people's faith: "Thus, through the raising of the dead man, the disciples are exhorted to faith in Jesus and prepared for the hour of his death."

6.3.2.2 An Exegetical Study of John 11:7–16

6.3.2.2.1 *John 11:7–10*

John 11:7–10

7 ἔπειτα μετὰ τοῦτο λέγει τοῖς μαθηταῖς, Ἄγωμεν εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν πάλιν. 8 λέγουσιν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταί, Ῥαββί, νῦν ἐζήτουν σε λιθάσαι οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, καὶ πάλιν ὑπάγεις ἐκεῖ; 9 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς, Οὐχὶ δώδεκα ὥραί εἰσιν τῆς ἡμέρας; ἐάν τις περιπατῇ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ, οὐ προσκόπτει, ὅτι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου τούτου βλέπει· 10 ἐάν δέ τις περιπατῇ ἐν τῇ νυκτί, προσκόπτει, ὅτι τὸ φῶς οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν αὐτῷ.³⁵

33 See Barrett (1978:390).

34 See also Carson (1991:406).

35 Translation: "7 Then after that saith he to *his* disciples, Let us go into Judaea again. 8 *His* disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? 9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walks in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. 10 But if a man walks in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him."

Introduction and Background

This is the disciples' first appearance since the healing of the blind man (9:2). Jesus suggests to the disciples that they return to Judea. Within the author's symbolic universe, Judea is synonymous with Jerusalem, the hub of Jewish hostility (See Schnackenburg 1990:324). At this stage, the tension between Jesus and the Jews is rapidly moving towards a dramatic climax.³⁶ The disciples realise the seriousness of the culminating hostility between Jesus and the Jews and refer back to the incident where Jesus was almost stoned (10:33, 39; 11:8).³⁷ The Jews hold Jesus' perceived blasphemy against him (10:33, 39).³⁸ After all, Jesus did equate himself to God in 10:30 (ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐσμεν) by claiming that he is one with the Father (cf. also 5:18–21).

Upon witnessing the disciples' hesitation to return to Judea, Jesus reacted as follows: "Are there not twelve hours in the day? (Οὐχὶ δώδεκα ὥραί εἰσιν τῆς ἡμέρας;). If any man walk in the day (ἐάν τις περιπατῇ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ), he stumbleth not (οὐ προσκόπτει), because (ὅτι) he seeth (βλέπει) the 'light' (τὸ φῶς) of this world (τοῦ κόσμου τούτου) (11:9). But if a man walk in the night (ἐάν δέ τις περιπατῇ ἐν τῇ νυκτί), he stumbleth (προσκόπτει), because (ὅτι) there is no 'light' in him³⁹ (τὸ φῶς οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν αὐτῷ) (11:10). Barrett (1978:391) reminds us that the Jewish day had 12 hours. During the day, people could move around freely,

36 Schnackenburg (1990:324) says: "The connection with the bitter dispute at the Dedication is deliberate. Events are coming to a dramatic climax; external events are pushing the inner movement forwards." Carson (1991:408) gives a succinct summary: "The Disciples recognize that the animus against Jesus is now so great it could easily result in his death."

37 See Schnackenburg (1990:324). The word νῦν does not specify a specific time. We can conclude from the text that this episode happened a few days prior. Carson (1991:408) claims that νῦν indicates "a short while ago". The incident between Jesus and the Jews must have been fresh in the disciples' minds.

38 Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:196) note: "The Judeans perceive Jesus' claim to be Son of God as a dishonor to God, so to defend Gods' honor, they seek to apprehend him (10:39) in order to stone him."

39 Barrett (1978:392) justifiably points out that ancients did not possess sufficient knowledge to know that sight is made possible on the basis of light that enters the eye from outside. What was believed, in the ancient Mediterranean context, that light shines from within the human body to the outside? Hence, if there is light inside someone, it shines into the world. Conversely, if the human heart is filled with darkness, that darkness shines into the outside world. According to Barrett (1978:320), it is important to notice that one should not follow just any inner light: "Men must not follow a supposed inner light, but accept Jesus as the light of the world" (8:12; 9:5). Jesus illuminates people's insides. The source of this light is not man itself, but Jesus (8:12). Life is only to be found with Jesus. Those who do not believe in Jesus, remain in darkness and have not crossed over from death to life (5:24). See also Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:196).

but during the night, movement was inhibited.⁴⁰ Jesus uses this metaphor to explain the time-period of his ministry. Jesus said that he was the 'light' of the world (8:12; 9:5; 12:46). 'Light' was linked to revelatory knowledge (Van der Watt 2000a:60).⁴¹ Earlier on in the book, it was argued that 'light' should also be linked to life (cf. 1:4). People, who do not know Jesus, occupy a deadly state of being (cf. 10:27; 16:3; 8:44). Jesus is the 'light' of the world. Those who believe in him have crossed over from a deadly to a lively state of existence (5:24). As the 'light' of the world, who was sent by God, Jesus reveals divine knowledge and imparts sight to spiritually blind people (John 9). As long as Jesus remains visible in the world, the 'light' is visible on earth. Barrett (1978:392) opines that the *hour* of Jesus' death and elevation (8:20; 2:4) should be seen as "illuminating the world through his death. [I]n the light given by Jesus, men walk safely; apart from him is darkness, in which men plunge into sin (9:39–41)" (cf. also Marcus 2006:73–87).⁴²

Metaphorically speaking (As mentioned above in chapter 5), the incarnation of Jesus gave rise to a giant magnetic field in the world and people are subsequently positioned on either the positive or the negative pole thereof (Hays 1996:149). In John's thinking, those who believe have already crossed from 'death' to 'life' (5:24). Those who faithlessly reject Jesus, are still spiritually blind (9:39), and occupy an existential state of death and spiritual brokenness, having already been judged (9:39) (Hays 1996:150).

The following was noted earlier on in the book:

- *Jesus is the 'light' of the world (8:12)*
- *who opens/restores/enlightens people's spiritual eyes (9:39)*
- *and saves them from a deadly existence in spiritual 'darkness' (5:24)*
- *by granting them eschatological life in abundance (10:10) within the family of God (1:12; 3:16).*

40 Barrett (1978:391) says: "During the hours of daylight movement was free and unhindered, but darkness brought an inevitable cessation of activity."

41 Van der Watt (2000a:60) remarks that Jesus is the Word (1:1–2), who stands in an intimate relationship with the Father. This intimate relationship enables the Son to introduce the Father to the world (1:18). Jesus reveals the will of God. As Revelatory Word, Jesus is also the Light of the world (1:4, 9vv.). Some reject him (1:10–11), while others believe in him. Those who believe in him, become children of God and have crossed over from a deadly existential state to a lively one (5:24).

42 In his article, Marcus (2006) argues in favour of the "Crucifixion as Parodic Exaltation," according to which someone is "elevated" in order to ultimately be humiliated.

Hence, we can surmise that the Gospel writer makes deliberate use of the ‘light’ metaphor. Within the author’s symbolic universe, ‘light’ is associated with life. Newman and Nida (1980:359) argue that “A person stumbles at night not only because of the lack of external light, but also because he has no light.” Those who believe in Jesus have internal light, and that ‘light’ opens up spiritual potentialities of existence. In this manner, the author prepares and equips the reader to not only anticipate the healing act that is to follow, but also interpret it from the right perspective.

6.3.2.2.2 *John 11:11–16*

John 11:11–16

11 ταῦτα εἶπεν, καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο λέγει αὐτοῖς, Λάζαρος ὁ φίλος ἡμῶν κεκοίμηται· ἀλλὰ πορεύομαι ἵνα ἐξυπνίσω αὐτόν. 12 εἶπαν οὖν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτῷ, Κύριε, εἰ κεκοίμηται σωθήσεται. 13 εἰρήκει δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς περὶ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, ἐκεῖνοι δὲ ἔδοξαν ὅτι περὶ τῆς κοιμήσεως τοῦ ὕπνου λέγει. 14 τότε οὖν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς παρρησίᾳ, Λάζαρος ἀπέθανεν, 15 καὶ χαίρω δι’ ὑμᾶς ἵνα πιστεύσητε, ὅτι οὐκ ἤμην ἐκεῖ· ἀλλὰ ἄγωμεν πρὸς αὐτόν. 16 εἶπεν οὖν Θωμᾶς ὁ λεγόμενος Δίδυμος τοῖς συμμαθηταῖς, Ἄγωμεν καὶ ἡμεῖς ἵνα ἀποθάνωμεν μετ’ αὐτοῦ.⁴³

Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Our friend⁴⁴ (ὁ φίλος) Lazarus sleeps (κεκοίμηται), but I go, that I may awake (ἐξυπνίσω) him out of sleep.”⁴⁵ The

43 Translation (KJV): “¹¹ These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. ¹² Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. ¹³ How be it Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. ¹⁴ Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. ¹⁶ Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

44 Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:197) note: “Lazarus is called ‘our friend,’ a relationship Jesus extends to all the disciples during his final words to them (15:14). [T]he term *friend* described intense loyalty among social equals.” Thus, Lazarus was seen as part of the inner circle of the Jesus-group.

45 Within Hellenistic thought, sleep and death are often related. Greek Mythology tends to use sleep as a euphemism for death (Kittel et al. 1976 vol. 8:548). Not surprisingly, “Ὑπνος” is the mythological twin brother of “Θάνατος”. Kittel et al. (1976 vol 8:552) note: “Sleep in the night is like this world and waking in the morning is like the world to come. Closely connected with this is the dualism of light and darkness for the men of this and the

author here portrays Jesus as someone with supernatural knowledge and someone who is in total control. Jesus knows that Lazarus is dead.

Newman and Nida (1980:359) are correct in their statement that the word “ἐξυπνίσω” appears in contexts where “normal sleep” is meant. In instances where death is meant, the word “ἐγείρω” or “ἀνίστημι” is used.⁴⁶ It seems as if death has lost its sting. For Jesus, death is not the final marginalising reality on earth. Jesus probably doesn’t even view death as an illness—the grip of death is minimised to the status of “sleep”. As a matter of fact, Jesus knows, and admits a few moments later, that he is the resurrection and the life (11:25). Thus, death lost its deconstructive power (Kittel et al. 1976 vol 8:555), because the effect thereof is “neutralised” in the presence of the source of life (1:4). Jesus is the essential embodiment of these life-creating qualities. Jesus came in the first place to give believers (eternal) life, existential potentialities and eschatological resurrection (11:25, 26; 12:50). The actuality of eternal life eliminates the vitality of death. Death, as the strongest power on earth, is met with a knock-out punch. If Jesus can overpower death, he will be the strongest power on earth, verifying Jesus’ position as the sent Son of God and proving his words true.

In the course of the narrative, the author(s) guide(s) the reader towards realising that Jesus does actually mean physical death (11:13, 14). However, it seems as though the disciples, at this stage of the narrative, are not fully aware of the

coming aeon.” John 11:11–13 does indeed deal with the metaphor: “sleep of the dead.” The expression “ἵνα ἐξυπνίσω αὐτόν” (v. 11) supposes an apocalyptic heritage. Just before the Evangelist allows Jesus to declare that Lazarus’s illness will not lead to death (v. 4), the ambiguous “κεκοίμηται” takes up this idea in v. 11 and reflects it back to the larger background of physical death. Kittel et al. (1976 vol 8:555) note: “In the interpolated v. 13 with its unique double construction περὶ τῆς κοιμήσεως τοῦ ὕπνου, ‘the rest which is sleep,’ the idea of the sleep of death stands in stark contrast to the ordinary use of sleep. The theological statement which relativises the power of death by the reality of salvation, moves on from the OT and apocalyptic basis beyond the assertions of Hellenistic religion, not using these to embellish the inevitable state of death but *proclaiming the basic powerlessness of death in the light of the resurrection.*” (Kittel et al. 1976 vol. 8:555) [Emphasis mine].

- 46 Carson (1991:409) expresses the opinion that sleep was not commonly used as a metaphor for death by second Temple Judaism. Yet, the Old Testament does indeed refer to death as an irreversible state of sleep from which one could not awake again (cf. Job 14:11–12). It was common place that, if death were to enter the picture, any form of life, together with its resultant existential possibilities, were eliminated forever and in all circumstances. According to Carson, the concept of resurrection (Dn 12:2) was not widely known at that stage.

implications of Jesus' words (11:12; Culpepper 1983:152–164).⁴⁷ The disciples are depicted as seemingly wholly unaware of the seriousness of the situation and its relation to both Jesus' divine mission and his life-creating potentiality.

After Jesus explains in no uncertain terms that Lazarus is dead, he comments that he is glad for the disciples' sake that he was not with Lazarus, so that they can believe⁴⁸ what they have witnessed first-hand (Newman and Nida 1980:360).⁴⁹ Jesus is here obviously alluding to the healing or miracle that is about to take place, where Lazarus will be raised from the dead. Carson (1991:410) holds that if Jesus was on the scene, he would probably have healed Lazarus from his illness (See also Salier 2004:130–131). This is indeed reflected in the comment by Lazarus's sisters, that should Jesus have been there, this tragedy⁵⁰ would not have happened (11:21; See Salier 2004:130).

The geographical separation of Jesus from the scene allowed the illness to go its expected course. In response Jesus then remarks that he is glad for the sake of his disciples that he was not on the scene, since the death and consequential raising of Lazarus would probably have a radical impact on their faith. The disciples are about to be moved from a position of absolute ignorance regarding the full implications of the situation, to a position of *intensified awareness of the life-creating ability and true identity of Jesus*.

It is only against the background of the realities of death, brokenness and destruction that the inherent qualitative life-creating ability of the Son can be accentuated—that the impossible can become possible.

47 See Culpepper (1983:152–164) for a good discussion on the function of misunderstanding in John. Apparently, misunderstanding was used by John as a technique not only to create an opportunity for the explication of spiritual truths, but also to draw the reader into the dynamics of the narrative. Of course, this also orients the reader to position him- or herself as either an insider or an outsider of the Jesus-group.

48 Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:197) rightly indicate that 'believe' functions as a key term in the Gospel. The term supposes loyalty and solidarity with Jesus.

49 Carson (1991:410).

50 Salier (2004:130) reminds us that, unlike the previous healing narratives, Jesus is presented as being intimately involved in the events surrounding Lazarus's death. In his opinion, the author deliberately makes use of this 'personal' scenario to draw the reader into the narrative. He further states that the Lazarus-story can be seen as a "tragedy within a family unit" (Salier 2004:130).

6.3.2.3 An Exegetical Study of John 11:17–27

6.3.2.3.1 *Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life: The Fulfilment of the Jewish Expectation of Eschatological Resurrection*

John 11:17–27

17 Ἐλθὼν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εὗρεν αὐτὸν τέσσαρας ἡμέρας ἔχοντα ἐν τῷ μνημείῳ. 18 ἦν δὲ ἡ Βηθανία ἐγγὺς τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων ὡς ἀπὸ σταδίων δεκαπέντε. 19 πολλοὶ δὲ ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐληλύθεισαν πρὸς τὴν Μάρθαν καὶ Μαριάμ ἵνα παραμυθῶσιν αὐτάς περὶ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ. 20 ἡ οὖν Μάρθα ὡς ἤκουσεν ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἔρχεται ὑπήντησεν αὐτῷ· Μαριάμ δὲ ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ ἔκαθέζετο. 21 εἶπεν οὖν ἡ Μάρθα πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν, Κύριε, εἰ ἦς ὧδε οὐκ ἂν ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἀδελφός μου· 22 [ἀλλὰ] καὶ νῦν οἶδα ὅτι ὅσα ἂν αἰτήσῃ τὸν θεὸν δώσει σοι ὁ θεός. 23 λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἀναστήσεται ὁ ἀδελφός σου. 24 λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ Μάρθα, Οἶδα ὅτι ἀναστήσεται ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ. 25 εἶπεν αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή· ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ κἀν ἀποθάνῃ ζήσεται, 26 καὶ πᾶς ὁ ζῶν καὶ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. πιστεύεις τούτου; 27 λέγει αὐτῷ, Ναὶ κύριε, ἐγὼ πεπίστευκα ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐρχόμενος.⁵¹

It was argued above that the Lazarus-narrative is painted against the backdrop of disorientation, crisis, death and the loss of existential possibilities. In this section, the narrative turns in a new direction, specifically in the direction of the possibility of life and existential potentialities. In 11:23, Jesus asks Martha if Lazarus will rise again (*ἀναστήσεται ὁ ἀδελφός σου*). Martha clearly interprets the words of Jesus from a different context. Martha answers Jesus

51 Translation (KJV): "When Jesus came, he found that he had *lain* in the grave four days already. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about^a fifteen furlongs off: ¹⁹ And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. ²⁰ Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat *still* in the house. ²¹ Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. ²² But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give *it* thee. ²³ Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. ²⁴ Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. ²⁵ Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: ²⁶ And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? ²⁷ She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

“οἶδα ὅτι ἀναστήσεται ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ.”⁵² Martha’s answer and preconception is, of course, normal, since it refers to a general Old Testament expectation of the resurrection of the righteous on the last day, a view that was especially held by the Pharisees⁵³ (cf. Act 23:8; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.1.3 § 14; *J. W.* 2.8.14 § 163; cf. also *m. Ber.* 5.2; *m. Sotah* 9.15).⁵⁴ Haenchen (1980:406) makes the following important statement:

Dieses Bekenntnis der Martha zeigt also nur die (auch im Christentum herrschend gewordene) Gemeindevorstellung, nämlich die Erwartung einer futuristischen Auferstehung (s. Zu Joh 5,28f.), die gerade bei Ez 37 eine einfache Wiederlebensdigmachung wäre, und d. H. Einer leiblichen, nicht einer geistlichen.

HAENCHEN 1980:406

This implies that the Jews believed in a physical, bodily resurrection (*leiblichen Wiederlebensdigmachung*), meaning that they expected the restoration of broken and dead bodies. Just like the dead bones of Ezekiel 37 were restored and received ‘life’, Israel would be restored to life. In other words, some of the Jews expected that they would be ‘healed’ or ‘restored’, but that when that happens, it would be their own dead bones that would receive life again. Martha associates the words of Jesus with this eschatological expectation of the restoration or healing of Israel. Schrage (1972:284) notes:

In the Messianic age of salvation or renewal of the world, Judaism expected the end of sickness and death and the healing of the blind: Everything God has smitten in this world He will then restore. Thus the blind will be healed (cf. Gn. r., 95 on 46:28).⁵⁵ This was based on prophetic promises for the end of time and on God’s proven deeds.

SCHRAGE 1972:284

52 According to Haenchen (1980:406), Martha’s words sound like a generally-acknowledged preconception and surety: “Durch das vorangesetzte οἶδα klingt diese Antwort Marthas wie eine selbstverständliche und allgemein anerkannte Gewissheit.”

53 The Sadducees did not believe in resurrection from the dead (cf. *b. Sanh.* 90b that refers to Dt 31:16; Is 26:19).

54 The Pharisees nurtured a belief in eschatological resurrection. See Josephus *Bel.* 11, 163. Martha’s belief in resurrection betrays her relation to “orthodox Pharisaism” (Barrett 1978:395). See also other cases in John where there is mention of the resurrection of the dead (cf. Jn 6:39, 40, 44, 45, cf. also 5:29).

Gn. r. *Genesis rabba* (*Bereshit rabba*), Midrash on Genesis (Strack, *Einl.*, 209 ff.).

55 Cf. A. Wünsche in *Der Midr. Gn. r.* (1881), 469; cf. Tanh. שני, 8 and Midr. Qoh., 1, 4.

It can therefore be argued that the eschatological conduct of Jesus to bring life, whenever it is not directly pointed out, would at least have been associated by Jews with healing or bodily restoration, namely the eschatological happening of the restoration or reawakening of the nation. If the Jews did in fact associate this prophecy with healing or restoration, it is very possible that Jesus actually associated himself with this Jewish prophecy. This conclusion is validated by the current text, where Martha (as a representative of other Jews) refers to the prophecy and Jesus then associates himself with eternal life. The implication of such an association would be that the whole Lazarus-event could be read as a healing narrative. Put differently, we could argue that Eschatological restoration, by implication, also means restoration in the form of healing. In 11:25, Jesus says that he is the resurrection and the life. With that statement, Jesus associates himself, within the context of his conversation with Martha, directly with the restorative expectation of the Jews. Salier (2004:132) is therefore correct when he notices that “Life, intimated in the concept of the resurrection, is now stated to personally reside in him and the eschatological dimension recognised in terms of Jewish thinking is closely associated as well.” With the subsequent healing act, Jesus will illustrate that he can restore a body that has irrevocably started decomposing, a reality that is only supposed to happen at the eschatological end time, but that is underway in the presence of Jesus. As such, the future expectation of the restoration of Israel is not only linked to Jesus associatively, but is also already being actualised by him, although differently than expected. However, John understands this life offered by Jesus as qualitative spiritual life within the sphere of God’s family. Accordingly, this life cannot be influenced by physical death. Maier (1984:495) rightly observes: “Jesus sagte zu ihr: Ich bin die Auferstehung und das Leben. Wer an mich glaubt, wird leben, auch wenn er stirbt. Und jeder, der lebt und an mich glaubt, der wird in Ewigkeit nicht sterben.” The type of life brought by Jesus is qualitatively different to ordinary physical life on earth. Put differently, the quality of earthly life has no bearing or influence on the quality of life presented by Jesus.

The expression “Εγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή” is obviously a metaphorical expression, where the metaphors ‘resurrection’ and ‘life’ are intimately bound to one another by the syntax (see Schnelle 2009:686). There are two ways in which to translate the metaphor (Van der Watt 2000b:213):⁵⁶

- I am the Resurrection that leads to the Life
- or
- I am the Resurrection *and* I am the Life

⁵⁶ See Carson (1991:413).

The first part of the metaphor indicates that wherever Jesus is, the possibility of resurrection (and restoration) is essentially also present (Van der Watt 2000b:213, 214). The second metaphor, I am⁵⁷ the Life, serves as a descriptive extension of the first metaphor: Resurrection leads to Life.⁵⁸ Jesus does not only raise someone, but in his presence and in relation to him, that person also truly lives (cf. also Schnelle 2009:686). In other words, Jesus is the essential embodiment of resurrection and life. Carson (1991:412) remarks: “There is neither resurrection nor eternal life outside of him.”⁵⁹ Wherever Jesus is, there is life and resurrection (Barrett 1978:396). The reality of resurrection has now already dawned and is not limited to the end time (Carson 1991:412). Jesus is the embodiment of the eschatological hope and the proof of its realisation in the present. God is the primary source of life, the One who owns life in the absolute sense of the word (Van der Watt 2000b:204).⁶⁰ As the primary source of life, and the Father of the family, he bestows life upon the Son, who, in turn, bestows it upon believers (6:57).⁶¹

This passage betrays the typical hierarchic structure of Jewish-Mediterranean families. The Father was the primary source of life, which he gave to the Son out of his own initiative. The Son, in turn, gave it to the children of God.⁶² Although Jesus is seen as the One who confers life, it must be clearly understood that God gave Jesus the authority to bestow life on his (the Father’s) behalf (see 3:36; 17:2; 20:31). The Son is able to bestow life because God gave him the ability to do so (5:18–29; 3:31–36; 17:1–5). The Son gives life like the Father gives life (5:21): “ὡςπερ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ἐγείρει τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ ζωοποιεῖ,

57 Cf. Ball (1996) for a study on the I-am sayings.

58 See Schnelle (2009:86–87 footnote 68) who points out that: “Metaphor, like symbol, accomplishes a transfer of meaning from one realm to another.” In other words, it “always involves creative element; something new is created . . . a new connection is made, a new order established” (Schnelle 2009:86 footnote 68).

59 Barrett (1978:395) says: “Resurrection and life are to be found only in Jesus. The Pattern of the life of all Christians is determined by the movement from death to life experienced by Lazarus.”

60 Newman and Nida (1980:209) explain that the expression “the living Father” does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. The expression “the living God” does, however, occur elsewhere in both the Old and New Testaments. John “translates” the idea of life in family terms. This agrees with the ancient paternalistic family structure. John portrays God as the Father of the family, the primary source of life.

61 John 6:57 καθὼς ἀπέστειλέν με ὁ ζῶν πατὴρ καὶ γὰρ ζῶ διὰ τὸν πατέρα, καὶ ὁ τρώγων με ἀκαχεῖνος ζήσκει δι’ ἐμέ. Translation (NIV): Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me.

62 Van der Watt (2000b:205) says: “The relationship between the Father, his unique Son and his children, is expressed as ‘a chain of sources of life’.

οὕτως καὶ ὁ υἱὸς οὕς θέλει ζωοποιεῖ”.⁶³ The metaphor “Εγὼ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή” is followed by two short sentences:

- a. ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ καὶ ἂν ἀποθάνῃ ζήσεται
- b. καὶ πᾶς ὁ ζῶν καὶ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα

In 11:25, Jesus says that those who believe in him (ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ) will live even if they should physically die (καὶ ἂν ἀποθάνῃ ζήσεται).⁶⁴ Logically speaking, it is not possible to continue living after death, except if the type of death doesn't affect the type of life that follows (Van der Watt 2000b:214). In other words, physical death has no impact on spiritual life.⁶⁵ The life that is passed on from the Father to the Son and from the Son to believers (or children) realises immediately and carries with it eternal life possibilities within the sphere of God's family.⁶⁶ Thus, Jesus says that wherever he is, the possibilities of Resurrection and the Life that flows from it, are also present.⁶⁷ Salier (2004:132) is therefore correct when he states: “The point of the whole narration is then made in Jesus' climactic words concerning himself as the personal locus of resurrection and life (11:24–25).” Life is personified in Jesus.⁶⁸ Maier (1984:495) is therefore also in line with this thought when he comments “dass ‘die Auferstehung und das’ ewige ‘Leben’ nur durch Jesus geschieht und geschenkt wird” (See 1 Jn 5, 12.20). The locus of controlling this life is also to be found solely in Jesus. With the expression “καὶ πᾶς ὁ ζῶν καὶ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα,” any possibility that death might have, is denied.⁶⁹ The believer receives access to eternal life on the basis of Jesus' identity as the source of life and resurrection.⁷⁰ The believer might die physically, but will never die spiritually.⁷¹

63 Translation (NIV): “² For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.”

64 See Van der Watt (2000b:206).

65 See Barrett (1978:396): “It is of course a fact that Christians die, but their death is followed by Life. The only death that is worth regarding cannot affect those who believe in Christ.”

66 See Barrett (1978:227), as well as Brown (1971:162).

67 Van der Watt (2000b:214).

68 See Moule (1975:123), who argues that the primary question is not what type of life is under discussion here, but rather *who* grants it. See Van der Watt (2000b:214).

69 Translation (NIV): “²⁶and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.”

70 Ridderbos (1997:396) notes: “The common meaning is that everyone who believes in Jesus, in life as in death, participates in the resurrection and the life that Jesus is and that he imparts.”

71 Carson (1991:413) says: “Ordinary, mortal life ebbs away; the life that Jesus gives never ends. It is in that sense that whoever lives and believes in Jesus will never die.”

He or she already possesses the type of life that would last forever (Barrett 1978:395, 396).⁷²

When Jesus, as the source of resurrection and life, touches someone, his or her essence is transformed. That person is transformed from unbeliever to believer; from a child of the devil to a child of God; from being spiritually dead to being spiritually alive; from living a limited life to living an abundant life (cf. 5:24). The believer participates in a state of spiritual existence that is qualitatively “superior” to an earthly state of being.

Martha Believes without Seeing

After having said that he is the resurrection and the life, and that those who believe in him would never die (11:25–26), *Jesus asks Martha if she believes it* (πιστεύεις τούτο). Whereupon, Martha answered (11:27): “Ναὶ κύριε, ἐγὼ πεπίστευκα ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐρχόμενος.”⁷³ Martha believes and trusts that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Ridderbos (1997:400) rightly notes that faith in Jesus is the determining factor here and that Martha is held up as a prototype of sincere faith:

For Martha not even the death of Lazarus, which Jesus has not prevented, could detract from this. To the Evangelist and his audience, Martha undoubtedly represented those who believed before they had seen and understood everything of what Jesus’ ‘I am’ would mean to some.

RIDDERBOS 1997:400

Maier (1984:498–499) agrees with Ridderbos and translates Martha’s answer to Jesus as follows: “Ja, Herr, ich bin zu dem Glauben gekommen, dass du der Messias bist, der Sohn Gottes, der in die Welt kommen sol.” Clearly, he translates it as “zu dem Glauben gekommen” and not with “ich Glaube”, since it does more justice to the text, which, in his view, illustrates that “‘Ich bin zu dem Glauben gekommen’ bedeutet dann eine reife, wohlbegründete Übersetzung und Glaubenserkenntnis.” He bases his argument on the fact that “Johannes sonst für ‘ich glaube’ das Präsens (Gegenwartsform) benutzt” and that the perfect verb should therefore rather be translated with the ‘Vergangenheitsform’ (Maier 1984:499).

72 Ridderbos (1997:397) is on the money when he says: “Faith in Jesus does not make humans immortal. What it does bring about is that from this moment on they no longer live under the power of death. Resurrection is therefore not a matter of ‘the last day’ but of now, of listening in faith to the Son of God.”

73 Translation (NIV): “Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.”

Faith,⁷⁴ for John, means the acceptance of Jesus and who he is, with the subsequent relationship that flows from it (Van der Watt 2000b:215), which is directly connected to eternal life (cf. 6:40; 47) (Schnelle 2009:686). Thus, when Jesus tells Martha that he is the resurrection and the life and she responds that she believes, it binds her inextricably to this type of life offered by Jesus. Jesus already said in 6:40: “ἵνα πᾶς ὁ θεωρῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον, καὶ ἀναστήσω αὐτὸν ἐγὼ [ἐν] τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ.” In 6:47, Jesus further says “ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὁ πιστεύων ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον.” When Martha confesses her faith, she is by implication also ‘raised,’ in the sense that she, as a believer, already participates in eternal life and has already crossed over from death to life (cf. 5:24).

Faith stands opposite faithlessness. Unbelievers are the objects of God’s judgment. Unbelievers have no relationship with either the Father or the Son (3:36; 8:44). Believers, on the other hand, stand in an active relationship with the Father and the Son. Faith involves knowledge of the Father and the Son—knowledge that results in the creation of life possibilities (Van der Watt 2000b:216).⁷⁵ To know the Father and the Son implies being in an active relationship with them. That is why faith plays such an important role. The individual believes because he knows, which is why he participates in the life that flows from this relationship (cf. 1:4,18; 5:39,40; 11:25).

6.3.2.4 An Exegetical Study of John 11:28–37

6.3.2.4.1 *The Conversation between Jesus and Mary (11:28–37)*

John 11:28–37

28 Καὶ τοῦτο εἰπούσα ἀπῆλθεν καὶ ἐφώνησεν Μαριὰμ τὴν ἀδελφὴν αὐτῆς λάθρα εἰπούσα, ‘Ὁ διδάσκαλος πάρεστιν καὶ φωνεῖ σε. 29 ἐκείνη δὲ ὡς ἤκουσεν ἡγέρθη ταχὺ καὶ ἤρχετο πρὸς αὐτόν. 30 οὕτω δὲ ἐληλύθει ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὴν κώμην, ἀλλ’ ἦν ἔτι ἐν τῷ τόπῳ ὅπου ὑπῆντησεν αὐτῷ ἡ Μάρθα. 31 οἱ οὖν Ἰουδαῖοι οἱ ὄντες μετ’ αὐτῆς ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ καὶ παραμυθούμενοι

74 Louw and Nida (1989:369) describe πιστεύω (believe) under sub-domain 31.35: “to believe something to be true and, hence, worthy of being trusted—‘to believe, to think to be true, to regard as trustworthy. Kittel et al. (1976:175) notice that faith is understood as a relationship earmarked by trust and faithfulness: “Similarly πιστός (“trustworthy,” “faithful”) is used of those who stand in a contractual relation.”

75 Barrett (1978:503) argues that, in relationship-terms, knowledge and existential possibilities are inextricably bound together: “The notion that knowledge of God is essential to life (salvation) is common to Hebrew and Hellenistic thought.”

αὐτήν, ἰδόντες τὴν Μαριάμ ὅτι ταχέως ἀνέστη καὶ ἐξῆλθεν, ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῇ δόξαντες ὅτι ὑπάγει εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον ἵνα κλαύσῃ ἐκεῖ. 32 ἡ οὖν Μαριάμ ὡς ἦλθεν ὅπου ἦν Ἰησοῦς ἰδοῦσα αὐτὸν ἔπεσεν αὐτοῦ πρὸς τοὺς πόδας λέγουσα αὐτῷ, Κύριε, εἰ ἦς ὦδε οὐκ ἂν μου ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἀδελφός. 33 Ἰησοῦς οὖν ὡς εἶδεν αὐτήν κλαίουσαν καὶ τοὺς συνελθόντας αὐτῇ Ἰουδαίους κλαίοντας, ἐνεβριμήσατο τῷ πνεύματι καὶ ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτὸν 34 καὶ εἶπεν, Ποῦ τεθείκατε αὐτόν; λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Κύριε, ἔρχου καὶ ἴδε. 35 ἐδάκρυσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς. 36 ἔλεγον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, Ἰδε πῶς ἐφίλει αὐτόν. 37 τινὲς δὲ ἐξ αὐτῶν εἶπαν, Οὐκ ἐδύνατο οὗτος ὁ ἀνοίξας τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τοῦ τυφλοῦ ποιῆσαι ἵνα καὶ οὗτος μὴ ἀποθάνῃ;⁷⁶

After speaking to Martha, Jesus sends for Mary, who, at that stage, was still residing at the house in Bethany.⁷⁷ Jesus had not yet reached the town itself, but was still where Martha had met him.⁷⁸ Martha quietly (λάθρᾳ) called Mary, who jumped up (ἡγέρθη ταχὺ) and went to just outside of town, where Jesus was, followed by the Jews (vv. 28–30).⁷⁹

- 76 Translation (KJV): “²⁸ And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. ²⁹ As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly, and came unto him. ³⁰ Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. ³¹ The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, she goeth unto the grave to weep there. ³² Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. ³³ When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled^b, ³⁴ and said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. ³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ Then said the Jews, behold how he loved him! ³⁷ And some of them said, could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?”
- 77 Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:199) believe Mary to have been the eldest sister: “Martha acknowledges her belief, indicating she is a member of the core group, and goes to fetch her older sister.” Elsewhere (1998:200), they remark: “Mary seems to have been the older sister, properly remaining in the house while the younger runs out to greet Jesus.” The fact that Mary, subsequently in the narrative, possesses relatively expensive material items (12:1–8), could also be an indication that she was the eldest.
- 78 According to Ridderbos (1997:400), Mary and the Jews represent a ‘primitive’ type of faith—one that has to experience the external miracle visually before they can acknowledge Jesus as the Revealer: “This is said to be especially evident in vs. 32, where Mary repeats Martha’s words without Martha’s second statement (vs. 22). She thus represents ‘the first step of faith, from which her sister advanced.’” See Bultmann (1971:405).
- 79 Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:199) believe that it was probably Jewish women who stayed with Mary in the house. This agrees with the ancient division between masculine and feminine space, as well as with who would have been where at certain times.

EXCURSUS: Burial practices in the ancient world

According to Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:199), it was paramount in the ancient world to have as many mourners as possible present at the death of a loved one. If people showed up in great numbers at someone's death, it was a sign of honour and status for the family in societal eyes. During the procession on route to the grave, men and women walked separately. After the burial, women went home alone and practiced mourning rituals for thirty days. Women usually sat on the ground during this time. Female family members usually stayed home during the period of mourning. Some scholars opine that Martha's movement to outside Bethany was unusual for that era. In ancient Israel, the full period of mourning lasted up to one year.

Mary fell down at Jesus' feet and told him that if he had been a good friend and if he had been there at the right time, her brother would not have died. Bultmann (1971:405) believes that Mary represents the 'primitive faith' of "those who need the external miracle in order to recognise Jesus as the Revealer."⁸⁰ Jesus became very emotional after he witnessed the response of Mary and the Jews (11:33). Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:200) hold that Mary did damage to Jesus' honour by accusing (and so challenging) him of the fact that he was not an honourable friend. According to them, Mary had the perception that Jesus would have made a greater effort to be there in time, had he been an honourable friend.

Ridderbos (1997:401) describes Jesus' reaction to Mary and the Jews as that it "became grim in spirit and yielded to deep emotion." The first expression (ἐνεβριμήσατο τῷ πνεύματι) indicates anger, which led to dismay (ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτὸν). In John 13:21, the same word is used (ἐταράχθη τῷ πνεύματι) in the context where Jesus points out his traitor (See also 12:27). According to Kysar (1986:180), the word "ἐνεβριμήσατο" is usually translated with 'anger' (cf. Mk 1:43; 14:5 and Matt 9:30). Kysar notes: "A variety of translations may be found, each of which shies away from the obvious sense of anger" (1986:180). In 11:34–35 (Jesus on his way to the grave) and 11:38 (Jesus at the grave), the writer further describes the intense emotions of Jesus.

The author's significant stress on Jesus' emotions has evoked considerable reaction from scholars. Some scholars believe that the anguish felt by Jesus (11:33) can be attributed to the fact that there was so much unbelief (11:37) in

80 Bultmann (1971:406) notes: "The absurdity of this lack of faith is laid bare, and in the setting of the miracle story it represents doubt in the power of Jesus to raise the dead. Yet this is really a symbolic picture of the Resurrection and the Life, in whose presence earthly death is void (vv. 25f.)."

his person and works (cf. Bultmann 1971:406). Brown (1966) holds that this interpretation is at odds with Jesus' own reaction of sadness over the physical death of his friend, Lazarus (11:35). Similarly, Kysar thinks that the simplest interpretation can be summarised as such:⁸¹

Jesus is made angry by the destructive force of death among humans. That is, he is angry at the reality of death that produces such suffering and pain as he witnesses in the sisters and their guests. The Creator is repulsed and horrified at the way in which death and suffering distort the goodness of creation and mangle in the lives of humans. They are expressions of the agony stirred within God by human suffering. Jesus' tortured emotions are those of the Father moved by the ravaging of humanity by pain and death.

KYSAR 1986:180

The Jews react to the emotions of Jesus by saying (11:36–37): “Behold how he loved him! ³⁷ And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?”

Barrett (1978:400) notices that the Jews do not deny the reality of the previous healing, on the contrary! The Jews do not deny the power of Jesus, but believe “incorrectly” by not identifying him as the Son of God, the ‘light’ and the Life. Hence, the Jews have a misconceived idea of Who Jesus really is and why he came to earth in human form.

6.3.2.5 An Exegetical Study of John 11:38–44⁸² *The Resurrection of Lazarus*

John 11:38–44

38 Ἰησοῦς οὖν πάλιν ἐμβριμώμενος ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἔρχεται εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον· ἦν δὲ σπήλαιον καὶ λίθος ἐπέκειτο ἐπ’ αὐτῷ. 39 λέγει ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἄρατε τὸν λίθον. λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ ἀδελφὴ τοῦ τετελευτηκότος Μάρθα, Κύριε, ἥδη ὄζει, τεταρταῖος γάρ ἐστιν. 40 λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Οὐκ εἰπὸν σοι ὅτι ἐὰν πιστεύσῃς ὅψῃ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ; 41 ἦραν οὖν τὸν λίθον. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἤρην

81 In my opinion, the reaction of Jesus was probably a result of both the faithlessness of Mary and the Jews and the destructive power of death and suffering on earth.

82 Schnackenburg (1980:334) combines 11:33–41a as a unit and describes it as: “The Visit to the Tomb and the Opening of the Tomb.” He then combines 11:41b–44 as another unit under the heading: “The Raising of the dead Lazarus.”

τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἄνω καὶ εἶπεν, Πάτερ, εὐχαριστῶ σοι ὅτι ἤκουσάς μου. 42 ἐγὼ δὲ ᾔδειν ὅτι πάντοτέ μου ἀκούεις, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸν ὄχλον τὸν περιεστῶτα εἶπον, ἵνα πιστεύσωσιν ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας. 43 καὶ ταῦτα εἰπὼν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ ἐκραύγασεν, Λάζαρε, δεῦρο ἔξω. 44 ἐξῆλθεν ὁ τεθνηκὼς δεδεμένος τοὺς πόδας καὶ τὰς χεῖρας κειρίαις καὶ ἡ ὄψις αὐτοῦ σουδαρίῳ περιεδέδετο. λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Λύσατε αὐτὸν καὶ ἄφετε αὐτὸν ὑπάγειν.⁸³

*Transformational Interaction: Jesus Restores the Existential
Potentialities that Has Been Lost by Lazarus*

When Jesus got to the grave (μνημεῖον) (11:38), he once again became deeply moved (πάλιν ἐμβριμώμενος ἐν ἑαυτῷ).⁸⁴

EXCURSUS: The marginalised position of the dead in the grave
No Jew was allowed to live in a grave or near a graveyard. Graveyards were usually located outside the city. The dead were therefore found in “marginalised” space—not only because of the resultant marginalisation between them and the group, but also because of the deconstruction of their status: The dead and the spaces they reside in are wholly impure. Neyrey (1991:287) notes: “The dead, [who] rank among the most unclean of all people . . .” Pilch (1991:207) argues in the same line of thinking: “Similarly, people afflicted in one or another of the symbolic body zones can also be considered unwholesome or impure because of their perceived lack of symbolic bodily integrity which also points to a deficiency in purity, wholeness, holiness.” According to the map of places, the dead do not belong in the same space as healthy people “[B]ut in their own realm of tombs and graveyards” (Neyrey 1991:282).

83 Translation (KJV): “³⁸ Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. ³⁹ Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days. ⁴⁰ Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? ⁴¹ Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up *his* eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. ⁴² And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said *it*, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. ⁴³ And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. ⁴⁴ And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, loose him, and let him go.”

84 Cf. McVann (1988).

The wonderful and ironic fact is that the traditionally impure space (grave of the dead) in the presence of Jesus suddenly becomes holy space (life is given). Shortly before the dawn of Passover, it is Jesus who bestows life. According to the contemporary, socio-religious thought, holiness and life was only available at the temple (Elliott 1991:223). However, Jesus held it against the representatives of the contemporary socio-religious structure that they exploit those who are in actual fact protected by the Torah. These traits are now realised in the presence of Jesus. Jesus becomes the new temple. In his presence, 'light' and Life break through. According to Neyrey (1991:218), the statement of Jesus that the Jews are like whitely plastered graves must be read against this background. The Jews are like graves, impure! Their impurity actually renders them 'out of place' and far removed from God's requirements for holiness.

Jesus will Turn the Irreversible Around

Jesus gives the order (11:39) to roll away the stone from the grave's entrance ("Ἀρατε τὸν λίθον). This command is immediately obeyed (Schnackenburg 1980:338). Nonetheless, the author inserts a quick dialogue between Jesus and Martha, "which introduces an effective moment of delay into the narrative" (Schnackenburg 1980:338). Martha is worried about the state of decomposition and the resultant smell of her brother, who had been dead for four days (cf. 11:39). The writer reports Martha's opposition in allowing Jesus the opportunity to do a miracle. Martha clearly believes that the restoration of Lazarus is impossible. The reason—Lazarus had been dead for four days and had started decomposing (cf. 11:39 ἡδὴ ὄζει, τετάρταιος γὰρ ἐστίν). Lazarus's state is one of total, cumulative brokenness and irreversibility. Strack and Billerbeck (1924:544–555) point out:

Bar Qappara hat gelehrt: Die ganze Stärke der Trauer ist erst am dritten Tage. Drei Tage lang kehrt die Seele an das Grab zurück, sie meint, dass sien (in den Leib) zurückkehren werde. Wenn sien aber sieht, dass die Farbe (der Glanz) seines Angesichts sich verändert hat, dann geht sie davon u. verlässt ihn, s. Hi 14,22: 'nur seines eigenen Fleisches Schmerz empfindet er, nur seiner eigene Seele Trauer'.

STRACK AND BILLERBECK 1924:544–555

It would seem as if the author's mention of the fourth day is not necessarily meaningless. It could possibly indicate that Lazarus was really dead and that his state was really irreversible. The reality being portrayed is one where no

life, restoration or existential possibilities are possible. But it is indeed against this background of hopelessness in the sphere of death and total brokenness, that the life-creating ability of Jesus can be illustrated—where the impossible could become possible. In other words, Haenchen (1980:398–399) is correct when he says:

Die Krankheit wird nicht tödlich sein—aber dennoch wird Lazarus ganz tief in das Todesdunkel hinabsteigen müssen, bevor ihn Jesus auferweckt. Gottes Herrlichkeit besteht nicht darin, dass er dem Glaubenden das Schwere erspart, sondern dass sich gerade bei diesen Sich-Verweigern zeigt: Er vermag durch seinen Sohn auch das Unmögliche möglich zu machen.

HAENCHEN 1980:398–399

Jesus can Grant Life Because He is the Resurrection and the Life

It is only against this backdrop that the wonderful might of the Creator-God can be appreciated. Jesus also answers Martha in such a manner with the follow-up question: οὐκ εἶπόν σοι ὅτι ἐάν πιστεύσῃς ὀψὲ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ? The current story ultimately serves John's purpose with the whole narrative, which is to illustrate who Jesus is so that people would believe and receive eternal life. That explains why the author presents Jesus in this fashion in the narrative. Jesus not only gives praise to God, but also 'helps' the onlookers to develop faith in him (11:42). By honouring God, Jesus not only illustrates the close relationship between himself and the Father, but also indicates the origin of his life-creating ability. At this stage, Jesus heals through mediation, but he also heals actively in that the Father bestowed this life-creating ability to the Son (5:19–23). Put differently, the miracle points towards God, but also towards the might that was given to the Son by the Father (11:42), which is: To grant life in all its fullness (cf. 10:10). Schnackenburg states:

The impression is confirmed that for the evangelist physical raising of the dead is only a sign for Jesus' power to give believers the true life which survives death. 'The power of God, which rules over death and decay, is to be made visible now'. In addition, however, it indicates that Jesus is indeed empowered by God to raise the dead.

SCHNACKENBURG 1980:338

The healing-miracle, the restoration of Lazarus to life, takes place after Jesus spoke only three words (11:43): "Λάζαρε, δεῦρο ἔξω." The words of Jesus call the

dead back to life (Schnackenburg 1980:340).⁸⁵ This reminds one of the previous healing acts, where it was argued that the healing took place after Jesus spoke life-creating words. Jesus creates life like God created life at the event of the Creation, by speaking a word. John makes it abundantly clear that the words of Jesus create life (cf. John 6:68 ῥήματα ζωῆς αἰωνίου ἔχεις; cf. 8:51), but that the words of Jesus are actually and in effect, the words of the Father (cf. 14:10).

In the background, one hears the echo of Jesus' words in John 5:19–21:19 Ἀπεκρίνατο οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐ δύναται ὁ υἱὸς ποιεῖν ἄφ' ἑαυτοῦ οὐδὲν ἐὰν μὴ τι βλέπῃ τὸν πατέρα ποιούντα· ὃ γὰρ ἂν ἐκεῖνος ποιῇ, ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ. 20 ὁ γὰρ πατήρ φιλεῖ τὸν υἱὸν καὶ πάντα δείκνυσιν αὐτῷ ὃ αὐτὸς ποιεῖ, καὶ μείζονα τούτων δείξει αὐτῷ ἔργα, ἵνα ὑμεῖς θαυμάζητε. 21 ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ἐγείρει τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ ζωοποιεῖ, οὕτως καὶ ὁ υἱὸς οὓς θέλει ζωοποιεῖ.

Herewith, the words of Jesus at the beginning of John 11's narrative are fulfilled—that the illness of Lazarus would not result or “coagulate” in a state of death (11:4).⁸⁶ On the contrary! The apparent presence of death and hopelessness actually results in the generative fullness of those qualitative existential potentialities brought by the Son. After Lazarus was raised, Jesus ordered people to remove the bandages and send him back to his home (Λύσατε αὐτὸν καὶ ἄφετε αὐτὸν ὑπάγειν).⁸⁷ Strack and Billerbeck (1924:545) note: “In früherer Zeit liess man das Angesicht der Reichen unbedeckt; aber man bedeckte das Angesicht der Armen, wie deren Angesicht vor Mangel schwarz wurde. Da hierdurch die Armen beschämt wurden, verordnete man, dass man das Angesicht aller bedecke wegen der Ehre der Armen.”

85 Schnackenburg (1980:339) opines: “The Jews believed that an extraordinary thing happened through the almighty power of God as a result of the intercession of holy men and woman, and this distinguishes the Jewish view of miracles from the Hellenistic one, which attributed superhuman powers to ‘divine men.’” This is the first instance in the Gospel where Jesus prays to the Father in addressing the needs of people. Jesus does not pray on his own behalf but for the sake of those who must still believe. This illustrates the sensitivity of Jesus towards others (see Kok, Nicklas, Roth & Hays [eds.] 2014).

86 Schnackenburg (1980:338) notes: “The two sayings, in v. 4 and v. 40, are like corner-posts supporting the interpretation of the raising as the greatest sign of the presence of God's saving power in Jesus.”

87 As such, Pilch (2000:29) says that the whole system should be involved with healing activity: “A review of all the information gathered by the EMS of everyone involved in a given illness episode helps an investigator to realize that efficacy always involves both symptom reduction and restoration to life”. Later on, the sending back of Lazarus will be discussed and fully negotiated from a cultural perspective as an element in the healing process.

In my view, there are clear signs from the text that Lazarus and his family were not poor, in the strict sense of the word. In 12:1–7, Mary brought half-a-litre, of a very expensive spikenard ointment (cf. 12:3 λίτραν μύρου νάρδου πιστικῆς πολυτίμου) and poured it over Jesus' feet. Judas reacted with indignation and asked why it was not sold for three hundred silver coins (a year's income) and given to the poor. Thus, it would not seem as though Lazarus and his family were poor, in the strict sense of the word. John explains this act by Mary—it can be seen as the anointing of Jesus in anticipation of his death (cf. 12:7; See Gnllka 1983:97).

Realising New Existential Possibilities

The act of sending Lazarus to his house implies that he is raised not only to life, but also to the existential possibilities that follow. Schnackenburg (1980:340) says: "Like Jairus' daughter, whom Jesus orders to be given food (Mk 5:43), the person who has been raised is to return to normal life. This is also a confirmation of the success of the raising."⁸⁸ Later on, Jesus is found in the company of Lazarus and his sisters, sitting at a table and celebrating a "Gastmahl" in honour of Jesus (cf. 12:2): Maier (1986:9) notes: "Wenn es heisst: sie *'bereiten ihm ein Gastmahl'*, dann ist ferner klar, dass man Jesus ehren wollte." This type of banquet was "eine festliche, grosse Sache." Hence, John purposely tries to indicate the successful re-induction of Lazarus. The implication is that he experienced a total status reconstruction, as well as successful reintegration into society.

As with the other healing narratives, the life-creating ability of Jesus is highlighted. The raising of Lazarus is the culminating miracle that points to the truth of the UDN, namely that Jesus is the essential embodiment of life and that he has the authority to grant it to whomever he pleases (cf. 11:25). We can agree with Salier (2004:133) that "Jesus explicitly connects his work to that of the Father and the goal of a believing response from those around stated." In this sense, the value of the present healing act as *semeion* is indeed emphasised in that it both points to the divine identity of Jesus and mediates the appropriate faith-reaction thereto. Loader (2002:472) is therefore correct when he remarks: "Resuscitation becomes a symbol of resurrection and resurrection a symbol of eternal life in typically Johannine fashion".

That Jesus has the ability to bestow life was indicated by the foregoing healing narratives. The author illustrated as much by showing how Jesus brought life, healing and restoration to illnesses associated with the category of death

88 See also Morris (1995:499): "We are reminded of Synoptic Incidents that show a similar thoughtfulness, as when he commanded that something to eat be given to the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:43)."

(Salier 2004:134). By recreating those existential possibilities that were lost by Lazarus and restoring his brokenness, Jesus overpowers death itself in the Lazarus story. In this way, the author prepares the territory for interpretation of Jesus' own death and ultimate resurrection.

6.4 Chapter Summary

John 11:17 records that when Jesus eventually arrived at the sisters after a long delay, he found that Lazarus had already been in the grave for four days (τέσσαρας ἡδὴ ἡμέρας ἔχοντα ἐν τῷ μνημείῳ). In 11:21 Martha says to Jesus: “κύριε, εἰ ἦς ᾧδε οὐκ ἂν ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἀδελφός μου.” With this statement Martha restricts the life-creating ability of Jesus to a situation where the potential of life still exists. In essence she claims that her brother's death had made impossible any potential for life. In 11:32, it says: “Ἡ οὖν Μαριάμ ὡς ἦλθεν ὅπου ἦν Ἰησοῦς ἰδοῦσα αὐτὸν ἔπεσεν αὐτοῦ πρὸς τοὺς πόδας λέγουσα αὐτῷ· κύριε, εἰ ἦς ᾧδε οὐκ ἂν μου ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἀδελφός.” Herewith, Mary also delimits the healing ability of Jesus by similarly viewing her brother's state of death as a situation where all potential for life had been lost.

Later in 11:38, at Lazarus's grave, Jesus requests that the stone be rolled from the entrance. Martha warns that Lazarus had already been dead for four days and that his body smells (cf. 11:39 Κύριε, ἡδὴ ὀζει, τεταρταίος γὰρ ἐστὶν). In my view, this comment is crucial to interpreting the narrative. Martha rightly points out that the body of Lazarus had already started decomposing (ἡδὴ ὀζει). When Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, he is therefore overturning a situation that had already deteriorated to an irreversible state.⁸⁹ Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead and enables him to live again. When Jesus restores Lazarus's lost existential possibilities, it immediately places the healing act within the category of recreation, seeing that life is created against the background of the irreversible loss of existential potentialities. Already in 11:4, Jesus remarked: “*This sickness is not unto death* (αὕτη ἡ ἀσθένεια οὐκ ἔστιν πρὸς θάνατον), *but for the glory of God* (ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ) *that the Son of God might be glorified thereby* (ἵνα δοξασθῇ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ δι' αὐτῆς).” In other words, the author wants the reader to know at the beginning of the narrative that the illness of Lazarus will not result in a state of death or spiritual impotence. Even if the morbidity would later end in death, the reader knows that death has lost its sting, and

89 Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:201) are therefore correct when they say: “The notice that Lazarus had been dead for four days is repeated here, thus emphasizing that he was beyond hope.”

that the life-creating ability of the type of life offered by Jesus remains active, even if the individual should physically die. In other words, the type of life offered by Jesus cannot be influenced by the death of a human being (cf. Van der Watt 2000a:120). The life of Jesus is thus qualitatively better than any other form of life on earth that perishes so easily. Jesus grants the type of life that is eternal. In terms of Johannine dualism, this type of life belongs to the heavenly sphere, where God rules. The person that receives this type of life will keep on living, even if he dies physically (cf. 11:25). However, Jesus mediates the healing of Lazarus. The question remains whether or not Jesus would still have the ability to create life should he lose his own?

In the course of the narrative, one moves from one space to another. According to the map of places, the dead Lazarus occupies an impure space—that of a grave (Neyrey 1991:282). The so-called impure space, where death is present, suddenly becomes holy space, where ‘light’ and life are given. In this way, the traditional categories of the time are broken. Jesus is portrayed as the new source of life. Abundant life can be found wherever Jesus is (cf. 1:4; 7:37–39; 10:10; 11:25 and 4:14). After the transformative interaction or act of restoration, Lazarus is no longer to be located at the impure space of the grave, but depicted in a household, where he sits at the table with his family during a banquet (cf. 12:1–2; See Smith 2003:133–172).⁹⁰ This image obviously conveys the success of the healing act. Lazarus is repaired to the extent that he is able to once again enjoy the existential possibilities that he had lost.

90 See Smith (2003), who conducted a study concerning “The banquet in the early Christian world.” In his book, he discusses the banquet as a social institution and studies the Greco-Roman banquet, the Philosophical banquet, the Sacrificial Banquet, the Club banquet, the Jewish banquet; banquets in Paul’s time and context; the Gospels and ends with the relationship between the banquet and Christian theology. Smith (2003:282) argues that “the banquet provided the ideology for social boundaries. . . . the boundaries of the community were defined by membership at the table. To be expelled from the table was to be expelled by the community.” The banquet was also *the* social happening where hospitality was shown to insiders. It is clear from 12:1–11 that Jesus and his disciples ate with Lazarus, Mary and Martha. As such, the text makes clear not only that Lazarus was healed successfully, but also that he had recovered the existential possibilities that he had lost. The unbelieving children of the devil (cf. 8:44), who share in murder and deceit (11:53; 12:10), are, by implication, left out of the inner circle. Martha was the one who served at this event (cf. 12:2). Mary anointed Jesus’ feet (cf. 12:3). This event is explicitly related to the anointing of Jesus in view of his death (cf. 12:7). In this manner, the act is drawn into the symbolic framework and becomes a sign that points forward to the dynamic of the Universal Divine Narrative. Smith (2003:274–275) is therefore correct in noting that John utilises the element of a banquet on a symbolic level to explain spiritual truths that form part of his theology (cf. also 2:1–12 and 13:1–35).

As a σημεῖον, this healing narrative obviously points to the greater truth that Jesus raises to spiritual life (cf. 5:21) those who are spiritually ill, blind (cf. 9:41) and dead (cf. 5:24)—thereby obeying a direct order from the Father (cf. 5:19–21). In John, this act is called healing (cf. Jn 6:10). The qualitative life of Jesus not only has the ability to heal biological diseases, but also to raise people from the dead and heal spiritual illnesses like spiritual blindness (cf. exegesis of Jn 9). The life-creating ability of Jesus brings true healing in every sense of the word. These statements bring important questions to light: 1) if it is true that the concept of healing was applied to the act of conversion by Jews of the time, could there also be other acts of healing in the gospel? In other words, could we speak of *word-healings*—like when the words of Jesus lead someone to faith and “spiritual healing” or “spiritual restoration”? (See 17:8; 6:68)? 2) Can the death of Jesus (as a state of brokenness), and his resurrection (as a restorative act), like in the case of Lazarus, also be seen as an act of healing? The next chapter contemplates these important questions.

Faith in Jesus Leads to Spiritual Healing

7.1 Towards Heuristic Categories

Certain heuristic categories were exposed in each respective case of exegesis done on the foregoing healing narratives. Those heuristic categories were summarised and taken up in the summaries of each respective chapter of the book wherein they surfaced.¹ It was argued that, in John, Jesus heals those who, categorically and associatively, occupy ‘deadly’ existential situations and experience the loss of existential potentialities. From a cultural perspective, this context of ‘death’ serves as a situation of *disorientation* and *crisis*. As agent of transformation, Jesus creates life after a divine interaction of transformation. In each case, this transformative interaction takes place just after Jesus had spoken life-creating words, which is reminiscent of God’s actions in Creation. The transformative interaction is followed by restoration or healing of the broken situation. The former situation of disorientation and crisis, with its associated loss of existential potentialities, is transformed into an existential situation of reorientation and newly-created life possibilities.

However, John’s healing narratives are not only stories for their own sake. When reading John’s gospel, it is important to keep in mind that the healing acts of Jesus function as σημεία (signs). As mentioned above, the healing acts of Jesus (as σημεία) are ultimately in service of John’s primary goal with the gospel, which is to indicate who Jesus really is (cf. 3:2; 9:16; 12:37; 20:30–31 and esp. 10:25—τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ ποιεῖ ἐν τῷ ὄνόματι τοῦ πατρὸς μου ταῦτα μαρτυρεῖ περὶ ἐμοῦ), so that those who believe it may receive eternal life (3:16; 20:30–31). As a σημεῖον, the healing narrative(s) obviously point(s) to the truth that Jesus restores spiritual life (cf. 5:21) to those who are spiritually ill, blind (cf. 9:41) and dead (cf. 5:24). In John’s theology, this is a direct order from the Father and these actions take place against the background of God’s mission (cf. 3:16; 5:19–21). This implies that the healing narratives should therefore be interpreted against the background of John’s life-theology and God’s life-giving mission (20:30–31).²

In an attempt at better identifying the basic characteristics of healings in John, we can systematise the abovementioned heuristic categories as follows:

¹ On social location and heuristic constructs, see Rohrbaugh (1987).

² Cf. Chilton & Evans (1997) for a discussion on the temple, purity and restoration.

7.1.1 *Crisis of the Situation of Disorientation*

In each of the healing narratives, there is an existential situation indicative of crisis, disorientation, illness, brokenness, death or the loss of existential potentialities.

7.1.2 *Agent of Transformation—Jesus*

In each of the healing narratives, it is Jesus who initiates the healing acts, or who is approached by someone to resolve the crisis situation. Jesus is the source of life (1:4), the transformation agent who was sent (cf. John 17), the Son of God (3:16), who bestows life upon whomever he chooses (cf. 5:21).

7.1.3 *Interaction of Transformation*

As agent of transformation, Jesus creates *life* after a divine *interaction of transformation*. In each case, this transformative interaction takes place just after Jesus *had spoken life-creating words*, which is reminiscent of God's actions in Creation. The transformative interaction is followed by *restoration* or healing of the broken situation. The former situation of disorientation and crisis, with its associated loss of existential potentialities, is transformed into an existential situation of *reorientation* and *newly-created life possibilities*.

7.1.4 *Representation—σημεία*

As noted above, it is important to keep in mind, when reading John's gospel, that the healing acts of Jesus function as σημεία. John says in 20:30–31: “30 Πολλὰ μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄλλα σημεία ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐνώπιον τῶν μαθητῶν [αὐτοῦ], ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ· 31 ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται ἵνα πιστεύ[ς] ἦτε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ.” The ultimate goal with the mission of Jesus was to create a new family³ on earth (1:12) so that those who believe and participate in the new family, would not have to perish (3:16), but would be saved from spiritual blindness (cf. 9:41; 12:40), ‘darkness’ (1:5; 3:19; 8:12; 12:35; 12:46) and captivity under the devil's rule (8:44), and so be enabled to live with God eternally, without ever having to face death (5:24; 11:25–26). The latter is all about creating life and life possibilities within the sphere of God's family (cf. 5:21; 24)—something that is directly associated with the Son's mission (cf. 3:16; 5:19–21; 20:30–31). The healing narratives should thus be interpreted against the background of John's life-theology. Seen through the lens of John's life-theology, it could be argued that the healings serve to illustrate *how* Jesus gives life. However, Jesus

3 See Van der Watt's (2000) book 'Family of the King', from where these ideas derive.

does not only give life to the recipients of healing, but also to the world and for example, the Samaritan woman. In my view, the interaction between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is a narrative that explains, on the level of analogy, the precise nature of God's involvement with the world. This narrative makes it clear that God's will is to give life to the whole world through Jesus (cf. 3:16; 4:10). From this perspective the two events, namely the healing acts as *σημεῖα* and the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, only disagree in intensity and not in (theological) nature. As such, both events can be viewed as 'healing' narratives within the framework of John's 'life-theology'. In what follows it will *inter alia* be argued that John's 'life-theology' is essentially about re-socialisation, in the sense that those who receive life from Jesus become part of God's new family (cf. 1:12). The identified heuristic categories are also relevant to the world's state of brokenness and God's intended plan of healing and restoration.

7.2 The World's Situation of Crisis and Disorientation: Spiritual Illness and Death

John clearly believes that all of humanity are in a state of crisis and disorientation. The hallmark of this situation is humanity's sinfulness (9:41), lost-ness and even alienation from God (cf. 3:16). According to John, humanity occupies a state of existence indicative of 'darkness' (1:5; 3:19; 8:12; 12:35, 46) and death (cf. 5:24). Even God's chosen people, the Jews, are so alienated from God that they have in actual fact become children of their murderous father, the devil, and as such are doing *his* will (8:44 ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστὲ καὶ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν θέλετε ποιεῖν). They do not know the Shepherd's voice (cf. 10:27), and, as a result, they do not know the Father (cf. 14:17 See also "τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας . . . ὃ ὁ κόσμος οὐ δύναται λαβεῖν, ὅτι οὐ θεωρεῖ αὐτὸ οὐδὲ γινώσκει· ὑμεῖς γινώσκετε αὐτό"). All of mankind, and particularly God's chosen nation, are spiritually bankrupt and spiritually blind (9:41) and they do not have the love of God in them (5:42—τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔχετε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς). Even so, God still loved the world so much that he purposefully sent his only Son, as the instrument of and the way to salvation (14:6), so that no one who believes in him would perish (3:16).

In the description of the Jews continued denial of Jesus as the One who was sent, John emphasises their bondage to the deadly existential state (5:24) of sin, lost-ness and the judgment that awaits them (5:22; See 16:11). It was their state of stubbornness that lead to their spiritual blindness and prevented

their healing (9:41; 12:40). John illustrates this fact in 12:40 by explicitly alluding to and quoting Isaiah 6:10:⁴

τετύφλωκεν αὐτῶν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ ἐπώρωσεν αὐτῶν τὴν καρδίαν, ἵνα μὴ ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ νοήσωσιν τῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ στραφῶσιν, καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς.

By applying this textual grip on the text with a well-known quotation from the prophet Isaiah,⁵ John emphasises that the healing and restoration of the nation's brokenness could only realise after the event of their conversion⁶ and coming to faith in Jesus.⁷

The connection between conversion and healing was not alien to ancient Jewish-Mediterranean thought (See Dillard 2002:58).⁸ The Old Testament is replete with examples of the connection between sin, punishment, illness/brokenness, conversion and healing (cf. Is 6:10; 19:22; Hs 5:12–15; 6:1–6; 14:5; Jr 8:21–22; 14:19; 30:17; 2 Chr 7:14; See Ps 60:4; 103:3; 147:3; Is 30:26).

7.3 The Solution: Faith in Jesus Leads to Spiritual Healing and Restoration

God's answer to this existential crisis of his people, is to send his Son to resolve the crisis and pave the way to salvation. By laying down his life and taking it back up again (10:17–18), Jesus made it possible to take away the world's sin

4 John is not the only one who quotes Isaiah 6:10. The same quotation appears in Mk 4:11–12. In John, the quotation is *textually closer to the Hebrew than the LXX* (Witherington 1995:226). Lincoln (2005:357) opines that the quotation does not correspond to either the LXX or the Masoretic text and that it underwent a fair amount of processing and transformation. See Lincoln (2005:357) for a discussion on this. See also Brown (1966).

5 Isaiah 6:10 is a popular New Testament text that is often used to explain the faithlessness of Israel (cf. Rm 11:8; Mk 4:12; Lk 8:10 and esp. Mt 8:13–15). Whereas the Synoptic writers place Isaiah 6:10 on Jesus' lips, John presents it as a Christian interpretation of Jewish faithlessness (cf. Brown 1984:485).

6 In his textual comment concerning the concept of healing in Is 6:10, Brown ([1966] 1984:484) rightly notes: "The three preceding verbs have been subjunctive, but now the mood shifts to the future indicative (also LXX)."

7 Most scholars interpret this passage without any reference to the concept of healing and what it really means (See e.g. Brown ([1966] 1984:484–485)).

8 See Dillard (2002:58), who refers to the typical "Reward and Punishment in Chronicles: The Theology of Immediate Retribution" with specific reference to 2 Chronicles 7:14.

(cf. 1:29—αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου) and to bestow eternal life on people (3:16). As such, the incarnation of Jesus made it possible to resolve the crisis of faithlessness, spiritual illness and death. John 6:40,⁹ states that it is the will of the Father¹⁰ (τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρός), that (ἵνα) everyone who sees the Son and believes in him (πᾶς ὁ θεωρῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτόν),¹¹ should have eternal life (6:40—ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον) and that Jesus will ultimately raise such a believer to (everlasting) life on the last day. It also promises that such believers will experience the expected eschatological restoration of Israel (καὶ ἀναστήσω αὐτόν ἐγὼ [ἐν] τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ). (See also 6:54). According to 12:50, the Father's instruction to the Son has eternal life as its goal (12:50—ἐντολὴ αὐτοῦ ζωὴ αἰώνιος ἐστίν). The Son is absolutely obedient to the Father and only speaks the words (truth) that he received and heard from the Father (12:49). Hence, those who see Jesus and hear his words, see and hear the Father in action (12:45). Subsequently, those who rejected Jesus and failed to listen to his words, are already judged and condemned by the words themselves (cf. 12:47–48). As a result of their rejection of Jesus and their disobedience to his words, they remain imprisoned in 'darkness' and in a spiritual state of being, characterised by illness and death (9:41). The final consequence would be their condemnation on the last day. However, those who accept Jesus and believe his words and realise that he is the 'light' who came to the world (cf. 1:4), do not remain stuck in 'darkness' (12:46—ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ μὴ μείνῃ). In 5:24, Jesus promises them that those who listen to what he has to say (believe his words—τὸν λόγον μου ἀκούων), and believe in the Father who sent him (ὅτι πιστεύων τῷ πέμψαντι με) already have eternal life (ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον). In other words, such a person has already crossed over (μεταβέβηκεν) from an existential state of death to an existential state of life (5:24—μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν). Such a person is healed of spiritual blindness (cf. τυφλοὶ 9:41; τετύφλωκεν 12:40) and sees the reality of God's Kingdom, because they are born again (cf. 3:3).

In John, the development of God's plan further unfolds when Jesus brings up the issues of rebirth and the workings of the Spirit during his conversation

9 See Ridderbos (1997:231), who is of the opinion that this passage contrasts the permanent nature of the (eternal) 'life' Jesus offers (cf. 6:33, 35, 39, 40) with the temporal nature of the life and existential possibilities offered in the Desert in the form of manna.

10 According to Köstenberger (2004:212), the fact that Jesus does the will of the Father leads to trust on the part of believers in the obedience of the Son and that the Son will bring them closer to the Father. The missionary command to Jesus is exactly this: to produce children of God (cf. 1:12). In this regard, see Carson (1991:290) for a similar argument. Carson is of the opinion that the clause ὅτι inseparably connects the conduct of the Son with obedience to the Father's will.

11 See Schnackenburg (1990:2.47).

with Nicodemus (cf. 3:3, 6). In 3:6, Jesus remarks that: “τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς σὰρξ ἐστίν, καὶ τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος πνεῦμα ἐστίν.” Faith in Jesus, and the life that follows, can only be realised in and through the work of the Spirit (6:63—τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστίν τὸ ζῶποιοῦν)—human beings can not accomplish it themselves (6:63—ἡ σὰρξ οὐκ ὠφελεῖ). For this reason, the coming of the Son was particularly necessary. Only the Son could have ‘healed’ the world from spiritual blindness (cf. 9:41 and 12:40). The healing of spiritual blindness and salvation from the existential state of death is only possible if people come to faith in Jesus—if they become converted. Only then can people be reoriented from a position of disorientation that is related to death and ‘darkness’ to an existential state of ‘light’ and Life. For John, faith in Jesus is the key to life and is linked by John to healing, just as faithlessness is linked to death and leads to the opposite of healing. In this way, conversion and rebirth is integrated into the framework of healing. Hence, in John the terms life and faith (conversion/rebirth) are associatively linked with healing, while the terms death and disobedience are associated with spiritual brokenness and illness (5:24; 9:41; 12:40).

In this manner, John broadens the term and concept of healing to include not only the description of biological healing, but also *spiritual healing*. Put differently, we can say that there is evidence of ‘word-healing’ or ‘faith-healing’ in John’s thought paradigm—especially where people are spiritually healed as a result of faith in the words of Jesus. It is precisely for this reason that the Western biological or Biomedical understanding of the concepts of ‘disease’ and ‘cure’ fail to do justice to the ancient Jewish-Mediterranean understanding and use of ‘illness’ and ‘healing’. It is clear that a one-sided Western Biomedical understanding of the *curing of a disease* leads to undervaluation and misinterpretation of the nuances in John’s thinking about spiritual healing. Those who wish to speak about healing in John will have to include, as part of their deliberation, the reality of spiritual healing or conversion-healing (9:41; 12:40).

7.4 Summary

At this juncture in the book, we can see that the author of John does not view the concept of healing as only an act of biological restoration, but also as an act of spiritual restoration—a theme that can also be found in the Old Testament. Hence, it seems as if the author utilises the concept of ‘healing’ or ‘restoration’ on a multi-dimensional level. On multi-dimensional level, these concepts do not exclude one another, but are pictorially linked: The biological healing act points, as σημεία, to who Jesus really is, i.e. the one who gives life (cf. 20:30–31).

Those who believe and convert receive eternal life and are healed from spiritual blindness (cf. 9:41 and 12:40). These very same people will experience eschatological restoration when they, not unlike Lazarus, are raised from the dead to life (cf. 6:39, 40, 54; 11:24). Put differently, we can also say that the concept of healing or of restoration, in John, is not limited to the curing of biological diseases, but also embraces—within the same category—eschatological restoration that includes spiritual healing and resurrection from the dead. As such, physical healing in John serves as a sign that point to the fact that spiritual and eschatological healing have become realities in and through Jesus. The ultimate goal in the use of the various *σημεῖα* (signs) is to convince people that Jesus is the sent Son of God, and that those who believe this truth will receive eternal life (cf. 20:30–31). In reality, the true healing that occurs is the healing of mankind's spiritual blindness. From another perspective we can say that the entire gospel was written to ultimately culminate in the conversion or healing of the whole world (cf. 3:16; 9:41; 12:40) so that mankind could come to faith in Jesus and thereby could receive eternal life itself (20:30–31). The qualitative life-creating ability emanating from Jesus (according to John), not only has the potential to heal biological diseases, but also to raise someone from the dead and, especially, to heal spiritual illnesses like spiritual blindness.

The logical question that flows from the above is whether or not there are occasions, outside the traditional framework of healing acts, where 'word-healing' or 'faith-healing' occurs? In other words, are there cases where people came to faith in Jesus and as a result, or by implication, were also spiritually 'healed' or 'restored'? In what follows, the interaction between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is discussed as an example of an act of spiritual healing.

7.5 The Restoration of the Samaritan Woman: The Interaction between Jesus and the Samaritan Woman as a Healing Narrative An Exegetical Study of John 4:1–42

7.5.1 *Heuristic Categories in John's Healing Narratives*

In the preceding section it was argued that whenever Jesus meets a sick person, he or she is trapped in a state of disorientation. Following an interaction of divine transformation, Jesus then restores the brokenness of the sick person in a multi-dimensional way, and also creates and bestows new existential life possibilities upon that individual. Such new life possibilities could be understood as being a completely restored re-presentation (re-formation) of reality: It is not only physical and socio-religious restoration that takes place, but, much more importantly, *new existential possibilities within the family of God*

(cf. 1:12; 9:41; 12:40). Those who come to faith in the Son of God, receive the privilege of being called children of God (1:12—ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι) and step into the sphere of Truth,¹² Light¹³ and Life.¹⁴ This is of course, the principal aim of John's healing narratives—they are presented as σημεῖα to illustrate not only that Jesus is indeed the Son of God, but also to confirm that he indeed received the full authority from God to bestow Life (20:30–31). In and through his own death and resurrection (cf. 10:17–18), Jesus illustrated that he is indeed the Resurrection and the Life, and as such also the source of true Life (1:4; 11:25). In this way an important theme is revealed in John's healing acts: According to John, Jesus not only restores physical and socio-religious brokenness, but also restores realised eschatological Life-possibilities. In John's description of the healing narratives, the healing acts revolve around one purpose, which is to show the authority of Jesus to give life and to restore life—life that not only modifies the current reality, but also guarantees positive participation in the future reality (cf. 5:24 Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ὁ τὸν λόγον μου ἀκούων καὶ πιστεύων τῷ πέμψαντι με ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον καὶ εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται, ἀλλὰ μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν). Accordingly, John's healing narratives is of utmost importance for his effort to illustrate the innovating re-presentation of reality introduced in and through the Jesus-events.

7.5.2 *An Exegetical Study of John 4:1–42: Macro Analysis*

Positioning of John 4:1–42 in the Context of the Whole

Although John 4:1–42 is an independent unit, it is still closely linked to the events described in chapter 2. Just as the miracle in Cana, according to Beasley-Murray (2002:58), points to a contrast between the water of Jewish purity and the wine of the Kingdom of God, the water at Jacob's well is contrasted to the living water that Jesus offers (cf. 4:14–15).¹⁵ In the same way the purification of

12 Concerning truth, cf. John 1:14; 1:17; 3:21; 4:18; 4:23; 4:24; 5:33; 8:32; 8:40; 8:44; 8:45; 8:46; 9:24; 14:6; 14:17; 15:26; 16:7; 16:13; 17:17; 17:19; 18:37; 18:38; 19:35.

13 Concerning light, cf. John 1:4; 1:5; 1:7; 1:8; 1:9; 3:19; 3:20; 3:21; 5:35; 8:12; 9:5; 11:9; 11:10; 12:35; 12:36; 12:46; 21:4.

14 Concerning life, cf. John 1:4; 3:15; 3:16; 3:36; 4:14; 4:36; 4:50; 4:51; 4:53; 5:24; 5:25; 5:26; 5:29; 5:38; 5:39; 5:40; 6:27; 6:33; 6:35; 6:40; 6:47; 6:48; 6:51; 6:53; 6:54; 6:57; 6:58; 6:63; 6:68; 8:12; 10:10; 10:11; 10:15; 10:17; 10:28; 11:25; 11:26; 12:25; 12:35; 12:50; 13:37; 13:38; 14:6; 14:19; 15:13; 17:2; 17:3; 20:31; 21:22; 21:23.

15 Beasley-Murray (2002:58) is correct when he points to the fact that John was clearly aware of the water-metaphor that acts as a sign for the Torah—the saying in *Yalkut Shimoni* 2, 480 is obviously applicable: “The words of Torah are received [into the heart] till the Torah becomes a flowing spring”.

the temple indicates a contrast between the old temple and the new temple (Jesus),¹⁶ while worshipping at Jerusalem or Gerizim is replaced by a new kind of worship, as presented in the new dispensation by Christ and the Spirit he sends. Hence, the layout of the present narrative is strongly influenced by the chapters that precede it, but is now determined by a new decor, characterised by the inclusion of non-Jews in the mission of Jesus (Beasley-Murray 2002:58). We saw earlier on that Jesus healed a nobleman's son from a distance, thereby illustrating that he did indeed have the ability to give life, and that he was indeed the source of Life (1:4; 11:24). In the exegetical analysis of the same narrative, it was illustrated that, in John's view, faith based on miracles alone is not good enough (cf. 20:29 *μακάριοι οἱ μὴ ἰδόντες καὶ πιστεύσαντες*).

Structure: This narrative can be structured as follows:

- Introduction (4:1–6).
- Dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman (4:7–26).
 - Jesus gives Living water (4:6–18).
 - The Father's heart for true worship (4:19–26).
- The testimony of the Samaritan woman (4:27–30)
- The dialogue between Jesus and his disciples (4:31–38)
- Consequences of this interaction for the Samaritan society at large (4:39–42).

Background: In this unit it is narrated that Jesus withdraws from Judea and goes to Galilee. This move has to be understood against the setting of the growing animosity and potential conflict between the Judeans and Jesus in Judea (See Schnackenburg, 1:422). For this reason, Jesus had to go 'through' Samaria.¹⁷ His arrival at Jacob's well (5–6) sets the stage for his encounter with the Samaritan woman (Beasley-Murray 2002:58).¹⁸ After his interaction with the woman, Jesus stays in Samaria for two more days (4:40) before departing to Galilee to heal the nobleman's son (4:43–54). Then, Jesus goes to Jerusalem for

16 The question is also whether or not 'new' and 'old' are the right categories?

17 Both in terms of language and content, there is an interesting similarity between v 4 and this comment by Josephus: "It was absolutely necessary for those who would go quickly to pass through that country (Samaria), for by that road you may, in three days, go from Galilee to Jerusalem" (*Vita*, 269).

18 For varying analyses and reconstructions the traditions behind the composition of this passage, see Bultmann (1971:175); Lindars (1972:174–76); Haenchen (1980:252–256); Becker (1981:165–68); for a discussion of the historicity of the narrative, see Schnackenburg (1982:1458–60); Brown (1966:1175–76; Cullmann (1976:48, 90); Haenchen, (1980:248–252).

one of the Jewish festivals (5:1), where he heals the man who had been ill for no less than 38 years (5:1–9).

The Samaritans: A Story of Orientation, Crisis and Disorientation¹⁹

In John 4:1–2, he narrates how the Pharisees became aware of the activities of Jesus and that he was baptising more followers than John the Baptist (4:1–2). Jesus also knew that the Pharisees had heard of him, which is why he left an unsafe Judea and returned to Galilee (4:3). His journey back, took him through Samaria where he entered the town of Sychar. Sychar was near to the plot of land Jacob gave to his son Joseph (4:5). Jacob's well was also situated there (4:6). As Jesus was worn out from the long and exhausting journey, he sat down next to Jacob's well. This happened at around noon of that day (4:6). His disciples went off to buy some food and were not with him at that point in time (4:8). It was then that the Samaritan woman approached the well to draw some water and Jesus asked her for a drink (4:7), clearly breaking all the (Jewish) social boundary rules of the day. Where Jesus crosses the 'ethical' boundaries of the day, the Samaritan woman draws it on his behalf. Astonished, the woman said: "πὼς σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὢν παρ' ἐμοῦ πείν αἰτεῖς γυναικὸς Σαμαρίτιδος οὔσης; οὐ γὰρ συγχρῶνται Ἰουδαῖοι Σαμαρίταις." Her question reveals the deep-rooted antipathy and aversion between Jews and Samaritans that developed during the Samaritans' miscegenation with pagan peoples that the triumphant Assyrian king imported to replace the Israelites. He arranged for these people to be settled in the northern kingdom of Samaria (cf. the events in 2 Kgs 17:24–41). Nonetheless, the Samaritans saw themselves as the true people of Israel—heirs of the promises of the God of Israel. They also believed that theirs was the original version of the Pentateuch, which they had received directly from Moses (See Beasley-Murray 2002:60).²⁰

19 Please note that the corresponding material of this section in Kok (2010) that reappears here in revised form takes place within the framework of written permission from Mohr Siebeck and derives directly from the original Afrikaans version of my PhD. Some of these same ideas/sections from my original PhD were also published in revised form in an article (Kok and Niemandt 2009) used here with written permission from the respective editors. At the University of Pretoria it is expected that doctoral research be published in journal form which was done so shortly after the Afrikaans Ph.D was finished in 2008. To widen the scope and impact of the research it was also published in the genre of missional studies (Kok & Niemandt 2009).

20 Beasley-Murray (2002:60).

EXCURSUS: Tension between the Jews and the Samaritans

Barclay (2000:149) rightly notes that the aversion between the Jews and the Samaritans was an age-old occurrence. In 720 BC, the Assyrians invaded the northern kingdom, deported many Samaritans and enforced the subordination of those left behind (See also Smith 1999:112). They did what contemporaneous conquerors usually did—deported just about everyone (cf. 2 Ki 17:6). The Assyrian king then brought people from other regions—Babylon, Cuthah, Ava Hamath and Sepharvaim (2 Ki 17:24)—to dwell in Samaria. Naturally, it was not possible to deport all the original Samaritans and some of them were left behind, which resulted in intermarriage with the newly-introduced foreigners. As far as the Israelites from the southern Kingdom were concerned, such behaviour was a disgrace. It marked the loss of their exclusive ethnic Israelite purity. Most Samaritans that were taken away to Media also never returned. In the process, on their part, they interbred with the Medes and took on their alien habits. As such, they are frequently referred to as “the lost ten tribes.” Those who stayed behind in Samaria and hybridised with new inhabitants also lost their right to be called (pure) Israelites. According to the map of persons and places, this hybridisation was viewed as an unforgivable offence.

At around 590 BC (cf. the three Babylonian invasions of 593, 586 and 583 BC, but esp. 586 BC), many of the inhabitants of the southern Kingdom, of which Jerusalem was the capital, were also deported to Babylon. However, unlike the Samaritans, this group stayed unyieldingly (and steadfastly) true to their Jewish identity and refused to hybridise. It is this group who received permission and support in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah from the Persian Empire to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. During this time, it was already clear that the Samaritans were treated with contempt by the returning Jews—they were judged to be people who had lost their Jewish roots (and inheritance) and consequently had no right to participate in the rebuilding of the temple of the Lord. A dramatic conflict between the Samaritans and the Jews followed in 450 BC, which was made even worse when the Jewish Manasseh (grandson of the high priest Eliashib) married Nicaso (cf. Josephus in Ant 11.306–312), the daughter of Sanballat, the Horonite (Neh 13:28; See Es 9:2).²¹

These events prompted the erection of a competing temple on Mount Gerizzim in the heart of Samaria under the leadership of Sanballat and

21 See Josephus (Ant 11.305–328) in Whiston (1996, c1987: *ad loc.*).

his grandson. In later years (cf. 129 BC), during the Maccabean dynasty, John Hyrcanus, the Judean general and leader, directed an attack against Samaria and destroyed that temple. Hatred between the Samaritan and the Judean intensified after this. It is therefore not surprising to hear the following words attributed to the Lord: "With two nations is my soul vexed, and the third is no nation; they that sit upon the mountain of Samaria, and the Philistines, and that foolish people that dwell in Sichem" (cf. Ecclesiasticus 50:25, 26). At the time when Jesus interacted with the Samaritan woman, the Judean/Samaritan acerbity had already lasted for 400 years. The Samaritan woman's astonishment, when Jesus, undoubtedly a Judean, communicated with her, is therefore understandable. According to Porter and Evans (2000: *ad loc*): "Jews regarded the Samaritans with contempt, considering them complete fools" (cf. Sir 50:25–26; T. Levi 7:2) "and idolaters" (cf. Gen. Rab. 81:3 [on Gn 35:4]), "who were easily murdered with divine approval" (cf. Jubilees 30:5–6, 23). They were considered as Gentiles (2 Kings 17:24–41). Even Rabbinic literature of later periods clearly betrays that Samaritans were viewed as apostate, totally impure and predestined for Gehennah.²²

Elsewhere I (Kok 2010:174) have also noted that the fact that the Samaritans were once before localised in an ideal position of existential potentialities within the Jewish symbolic universe (position of orientation), did not guarantee their present positioning at the time of Jesus (cf. Barrett 1955:194), because they were seen as being ritually impure (Brown 1966:170). The Jews believed that "the daughters of the Samaritans are menstruants from their cradle (*Niddah* 4.1)." (Barrett [1955:194]; cf. also Kok [2010:174]). Consequently, all Samaritan women, as well as the equipment they handle, were believed to be impure. Naturally therefore, if Jesus were to drink from a jar used by a Samaritan woman, he would become impure/contaminated. According to Israel's concentric classification of persons and places, Samaritans were fundamentally out of place, rejected from the predestined nation of God (Neyrey 1990:54–55 and 1991:275–279).²³

It is interesting to view this narrative from the vantage point of an ancient, temple-oriented Jew as I have argued elsewhere (Kok 2010:175): As if it is not enough that Jesus *speaks to an impure Samaritan* and then *drinks* from a vessel handled by a Samaritan (cf. Barrett 1955:194), Jesus also speaks to a *woman*, and

22 Porter & Evans (2000: *ad loc*).

23 Compare the discussion of the Jewish maps of places, persons and times above.

an *adulterous* one at that (cf. *m. Aboth* 1.5).²⁴ According to Keener (1993: *ad loc*), Samaritans would generally also have condemned this woman, “which would have resulted in ostracism from the Samaritan religious community—which would have been nearly coextensive with the whole Samaritan community.”

Crisis and Disorientation

In my opinion (see also Kok 2010:176–177), the situation of crisis and disorientation operated on at least two levels: First, the Samaritan woman’s personal situation of crisis and disorientation creates the possibility to also address the second level which pertains to the greater societal crisis of marginalisation, and the loss of existential possibilities, etcetera, by the Samaritans as a socio-religious group. The latter creates the opportunity for this narrative of Jesus and the Samaritan woman, to serve as a sign (σημείον) that communicates the greater truths of John’s theology (of boundary-crossing-reconciliation). Typically, John uses everyday situations to illustrate divine truths (Kok 2010:176–177). At first glance, John could not have chosen a worse socio-religious scenario than this narrative to illustrate the manner in which Jesus gives life! (See also previously Kok 2010:176). But, it would seem that John oftentimes makes use of intensified scenarios to accentuate and illustrate the revelation of life in and through Jesus: In John 4:43–54, the nobleman’s son is on the brink of death; in John 5:1–9, we encounter a man that had been ill for 38 years (cf. social marginalisation); in John 9:1, John depicts a man that had been blind since birth; and in John 11, Lazarus loses his life completely (See Brown 1966:175–176). The healing actions of Jesus in John, (functioning as signs²⁵ [σημεία]), are depicted against a *hyperbolic background* so as to illustrate, accentuate and clearly contrast the abilities of Jesus to give qualitative life and procure restoration, with, on the other hand, the reality of death, brokenness and the loss of existential potential and possibilities (cf. 10:10) (Kok 2010:176–177).

7.6 Jesus Offers the Gift of Life as an Agent of Transformation (4:7–18)

7.6.1 *Jesus Initiates the Interaction and Shatters the Boundaries of Separation*

It was claimed above that the Samaritans were, from the vantage point of the Judeans, not only trapped in a position of socio-religious marginalisation,

24 According to Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:100), the woman’s reputation and honour is irreparable.

25 See also Temple (1962).

but also, by implication, cut off from the heart of the ‘real’ temple and, as a result, the presence of God (Kok 2010:176–177). According to the Judeans, the Samaritans were neither part of God’s chosen people nor of His saving ‘light’ and life. *Ecclesiasticus* 50:25, 26 claims God to have said: “With two nations is my soul vexed, and the third is no nation; they that sit upon the mountain of Samaria, and the Philistines, and that foolish people that dwell in Sichem”. They had lost their ‘life’ and, hence, were judged to be a doomed people. This leads to a crisis situation that is playing itself out. The crisis situation can be described as a state of disorientation regarding the Jewish cartography of purity. Categorically, this state of affairs is closely related to socio-religious ‘death’. Within this situation of crisis and disorientation, Jesus steps in as the agent of transformation, right in the middle, between the Jews and the marginalised Samaritans, thereby shattering the impediments that separate them.²⁶

It is clear that a certain dynamic interaction took place between Jesus and the Samaritan woman: John’s Jesus *initiated* the interaction with the ‘unclean’ Samaritan woman (4:7), at the well,²⁷ when he asked her for some drinking water (Barrett 1955:195). As we have already mentioned, in so doing, Jesus moved beyond the socio-religious *status quo* of the day (cf. Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:98–99). The specific nature of the social interaction initiated by Jesus was intended to create a symbolic cultural bridge. Thereby, Jesus brought about a meaningful relation, on a social level, with the possibility for open communication between himself and the woman—the possibility to exchange words and thoughts (Kok 2010).²⁸

As I have said elsewhere (Kok 2010) Jesus shares his true identity with the Samaritan woman and offers her the gift (τὴν δωρεάν) of living water

26 According to Barclay (2000: *ad loc*), there was yet another way in which Jesus broke down the boundaries of separation, i.e. by putting his Jewish reputation at risk: “The Samaritan was a woman. The strict Rabbis forbade a Rabbi to greet a woman in public. A Rabbi might not even speak to his own wife or daughter or sister in public. There were even Pharisees who were called ‘the bruised and bleeding Pharisees’ because they shut their eyes when they saw a woman on the street and so walked into walls and houses! For a Rabbi to be seen speaking to a woman in public was the end of his reputation—and yet Jesus spoke to this woman. Not only was she a woman; she was also a woman of notorious character. No decent man, let alone a Rabbi, would have been seen in her company, or even exchanging a word with her—and yet Jesus spoke to her.”

27 Smith (1999:11) points out that the mutual meeting of men and women at wells is a common theme in Scripture (cf. Gn 24; 1 Sm 9:11; 1 Ki 17:10).

28 Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:99) go as far as to say that the woman became part of Jesus’ interpersonal in-group when they shared equipment at the well, seeing as this latter act transformed ‘public space’ into ‘private space’. Measured against Pharisaic standards, this was a very serious deed that led to contamination.

(4:10—ὕδωρ ζῶν; cf. also 6:35 ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς; See Jn 7:37–39).²⁹ The latter is something only God can do, of course (4:10, 14). Naturally, the living water³⁰ granted by Jesus also creates existential potentialities within God's new family (Barrett 1955:195; Smith 1999:113; See Jr 2:13; [ὅτι δύο πονηρὰ ἐποίησεν ὁ λαός μου, ἐμέ ἐγκατέλιπον, πηγὴν ὕδατος ζωῆς, καὶ ὤρυξαν ἑαυτοῖς λάκκους συντετριμμένους, οἳ οὐ δύνησονται ὕδωρ συνέχειν]; Zch 14:8 [καὶ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἐξελεύσεται ὕδωρ ζῶν ἐξ Ἱερουσαλὴμ]; Ezk 47:9 [ἔσται πᾶσα ψυχὴ τῶν ζῶντων τῶν ἐκζέοντων ἐπὶ πάντα, ἐφ' ἃ ἂν ἐπέλθῃ ἐκεῖ ὁ ποταμός, ζήσεται, καὶ ἔσται ἐκεῖ ἰχθὺς πολλὸς σφόδρα, ὅτι ἡκεῖ ἐκεῖ τὸ ὕδωρ τοῦτο, καὶ ὑγιάσει καὶ ζήσεται, πᾶν, ἐφ' ὃ ἂν ἐπέλθῃ ὁ ποταμός ἐκεῖ, ζήσεται.]; See John 7:37–39).

7.6.2 *The Spiritual Blindness of the Samaritan Woman*

The Samaritan woman displays a *complete lack of comprehension* (Barrett 1955:196)—she interprets the words of Jesus in a non-spiritual manner (Smith 1999:114) and hears these words through faithless ears (Kok 2010).³¹ At this stage, she is spiritually blind and unable to see the Kingdom of God (cf. 3:3—ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν, οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ; See 9:41; 12:40). She is

29 Within the confines of John's theology, Brown (1966:178) limits the interpretation to two possibilities: Living water refers to: a) Jesus' revelation to humanity; or b) the Spirit Jesus bestows upon people. According to Beasley Murray (1987: *ad loc*), whom I *extensively quote below*, because of the importance of his argument: "The 'gift of God' denotes the salvation of God in an inclusive sense. The 'living water' from Jesus is here virtually equated with it. 'Living water' is a common expression for flowing or spring water, distinct from still water, as of a cistern or well, and so for fresh water as compared with brackish. The woman's understanding in the setting by the well is perfectly comprehensible. The absolute necessity of water for life caused it to become a wide-ranging symbol in religious thought. In the Old Testament, it is applied to God, 'the fountain of living waters' (Jer 2:13; 17:13); in Judaism to the Law ('As water is life for the world, so are the words of the Torah life for the world,' SD 11, 22, 48 [84a]), to wisdom (e.g. Sir 24:21, 24–27), to the Holy Spirit ('As water is given to dry land and is led over arid land, so will I give my Holy Spirit to your sons and my blessings to your children's children,' Tg. Isa. 44:3), and even (by Philo) to the Logos, which is said to flow like a stream from Wisdom (*De somn.* 2.242; for further illustrations see Str-B 2:433–36). In view of the contemporary Jewish emphasis on the Torah as life for the world, it is tempting to view the 'living water' in our passage as relating primarily to the revelation brought by the Revealer, or the gift bestowed by the revelation (see Bultmann, 181–87)."

30 The term "living water" was not a commonly-used metaphor in Rabbinic texts (Barrett 1995:195), although water was commonly used as a metaphor. In John, the "water" metaphor refers, in particular manner, to the Holy Spirit, who gives life (cf. 6:63; 7:37–39).

31 In the Gospel according to John, "salvation faith" (πιστεύω and its 98 appearances) comprises not only the acceptance of Jesus as the Son of God, but also the existential activation and determination thereof on people's deeds (Van der Watt 2005:121).

not only blind, but she also fails to recognise the voice of the ‘Good Shepherd’ (cf. 10:5; 14:17), which is why she also fails to recognise the Father (cf. 7:28; 8:19; 14:17; 16:3). In John 3:6, Jesus says: “τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς σὰρξ ἐστίν, καὶ τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος πνεῦμα ἐστίν.” In other words, if someone is not born of the Spirit, such a person sees and hears the words of Jesus with faithless eyes and ears, rendering this person unable to see the Kingdom of God (3:3—ἐὰν μὴ τις γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν, οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ).

Previously I have argued (Kok 2010) that ironically, the woman asks the most fundamental questions (Smith 1999:114), without realising the importance thereof (Borchert 2001:204; cf. Macdonald 1964): 1) πόθεν³² οὖν ἔχεις τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ ζῶν; (4:11),—*where is the source* (1:46; 7:4–42, 52) of *living water* to be found? Put another way: “where do you find God?” and, 2) “how is Jesus more important than tradition?” (4:12) (Kok 2010:176–177).³³

Jesus responds to this questions by saying: “πᾶς ὁ πίνων ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος τούτου διψήσει πάλιν.”¹⁴ ὃς δ’ ἂν πίη ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος οὗ ἐγὼ δώσω αὐτῷ, οὐ μὴ διψήσει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἀλλὰ τὸ ὕδωρ ὃ δώσω αὐτῷ γενήσεται ἐν αὐτῷ πηγὴ ὕδατος ἀλλομένου εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον” (4:13–14). Hence, Jesus here claims to be the new source of true life—of living water.³⁴ For a *second time*, the woman construes the words of Jesus in a non-spiritual manner and betrays her lack of comprehension. At this stage of the social dynamic in the conversation’s social dynamic, the question could be whether Jesus would stand up and leave the woman in her faithlessness, or whether he would “heal/restore” her spiritual blindness by performing

32 The word πόθεν (from where?) is one of John’s key words—it is used about 13 times in this gospel. According to John, most people do not know ‘where’ Jesus comes ‘from’ (e.g. 7:27 and 8:14; See also 6:41–42). Likewise, this woman did not know or understand ‘where’ Jesus got this living water ‘from’ (4:11). It would seem as though acknowledgement of his origin lies at the core of human misunderstanding about Jesus (See Borchert 2001:204).

33 In John, Jesus becomes the new centre. He replaces or outshines most cultic and historical symbols central to Israel’s faith. See John 6, where Jesus claims to be the ‘Bread of heaven’, analogically similar and even greater than the bread provided by Moses. To eat the bread that is Jesus means to believe in him and to have fellowship with him. Drinking water likewise means to believe. John clearly makes use of the well-known traditions of Holy Scripture to support his argument that Jesus is the true completion of all expectations. Lightfoot (1956:134) is therefore correct in remarking: “St. John’s purpose in each case is no doubt to emphasize the measureless superiority of the new order to anyone or anything representative of the old order.”

34 Isaiah 55:1–5 already promised the gifts of ‘water and bread’ to the thirsty (אֲנִי-לֶחֶם) and hungry, and that outsiders would become part of the herd (church) (Is 55:1–5). Later on, wisdom writings took up this theme as a symbol of God’s wisdom teaching (Sir 24:21; 1 Enoch 48:1). In John’s narrative, Jesus offers life to the thirsty—to bastards rejected by the Jewish community. This results in one of the earliest confessions in John’s Gospel (cf. 4:42).

a ‘miracle-sign’ (σημεῖα), thereby instigating an interaction of transformation, thereby revealing his divine origins to her?

7.6.3 *Jesus Opens the Samaritan Woman’s Eyes Through Revelation*

Suddenly, as I have argued elsewhere the dynamic of the social interaction transposes to a next level of abstraction—a level of revelation (Kok 2010:181).³⁵ In John 4:16, Jesus speaks unveiling words that penetrate her soul—“ὑπαγε φώνησον τὸν ἄνδρα σου καὶ ἐλθέ ἐνθάδε”. Jesus reveals to the Samaritan woman that he possesses supernatural knowledge of her most intimate personal life, he namely knows of her many husbands (4:17–18—καλῶς εἶπας ὅτι ἄνδρα οὐκ ἔχω.¹⁸ πέντε γὰρ ἄνδρας ἔσχες καὶ νῦν ὃν ἔχεις οὐκ ἔστιν σου ἀνὴρ τοῦτο ἀληθές εἴρηκας). In my view, the dynamics of this transformative interaction recalls the dynamics of the healing acts, where Jesus repeatedly reveals his supernatural identity (See Morris 1975:283).³⁶ It is striking how the Samaritan woman experiences *this* revelatory knowledge as a sign (cf. 4:29–30 [δεῦτε ἴδετε ἄνθρωπον ὃς εἶπέν μοι πάντα ὅσα ἐποίησα, μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ χριστός; 30 ἐξῆλθον ἐκ τῆς πόλεως καὶ ἦρχοντο πρὸς αὐτόν]; 4:39)—a sign that Jesus is not just another man, but the long-awaited prophet, the Christ (4:29—ὁ χριστός) (*Taheb*-cf. Dt 18:15–18), a prophet sent by God (cf. 4:19—θεωρῶ ὅτι προφήτης εἶ σύ; cf. 4:39).³⁷ According

35 According to Barrett (1955:196), the woman’s misunderstanding continues, that is *until* Jesus initiates the process by taking a fresh approach.

36 The dynamic of this social interaction inherently agrees with that of the healing narratives examined here.

37 Westcott (1881:71) rightly states that the word θεωρῶ denotes consideration (reflection) and progressive vision, not immediate perception. Wengst (2000:172) postulates: “Mit dieser Erkenntnis weiss sie schon viel mehr über Jesus als am Anfang der Begungnung, Aber sie weiss noch nicht genug”. Thyen (1005:268), on the other hand, argues: “Auch wenn Wilckens den ‘Propheten wie Mose’ von Deut 18:15–18 wohl zu Unrecht mit dem *Taheb* identifiziert und dieses als “die Zentralgestalt der samaritanischen Messiaerwartung” bestimmt, macht er doch zu Recht darauf aufmerksam, dass Jesus sich mit seinem ἐγώ εἰμι nicht direkt mit dem von der Frau erwarteten Messias identifiziert.” According to Barrett (1955:197), the Samaritan woman merely believes Jesus to be a prophet, as in 1:21. According to him, she misinterprets who Jesus is and, as a result, doesn’t really believe, seeing that the Samaritans did not accept the authority of the prophets. Elsewhere, in his commentary on 4:39, Barrett (1955:204) says: “To bear witness (see 1.7) is the task of a disciple. The woman joins with John the Baptist as witness, and in fact precedes the apostles.” In other words, it is clear that the witness of the Samaritan woman ultimately leads other people to faith. Her words and her witness lead to positive faith in Jesus and to the ultimate recognition of his true identity (4:42). According to Hindson et al. (1997: *ad loc*), the Samaritan woman first sees a Jew, then a prophet, and ultimately the Messiah (See Wengst 2000:172). Her faith betrays progressive stages of development. The question is

to Beasley Murray (2002: *ad loc*), as I have pointed out before (Kok 2010:181), this is indeed an accurate representation of the Samaritans' messianic expectation, which is not defined by prophetic books, but by the Pentateuch, markedly by Deuteronomy 18:15–18 (See also Brown 1966:171). They believed that the *Taheb*, like another Moses, would restore true faith in God, reveal the 'truth' and re-introduce the proper worship of God (See MacDonald [1964:362–365]).³⁸ According to Carson (1994: *ad loc*), Jesus was willing to be described by the Samaritan woman as a prophet on the basis of their unique Messianic expectation.³⁹ Morris (1975:266) agrees and declares: "For her to speak of Jesus as a prophet was thus to move into the area of messianic speculation."

whether this faith should be seen as the type of Johannine faith that leads to life? First off, the woman didn't recognise Jesus. Spiritually speaking, she was still blind and unable to see Jesus. She even failed to recognise the spiritual import of his words and that *these* words could lead to life (4:10–15). John's readers already know that faith in Jesus is only possible if the Spirit opens your spiritual eyes (3:3) and you are reborn (1:13). Those who truly believe, then become children of God (1:12), because they are spiritually reborn (1:13) and healed from their former blindness (cf. 9:41). In the immediate literary context, Jesus offers her living water (4:10). *This* is the greatest thirst in the narrative. The instant this woman recognised who Jesus really is (4:25–29), she was born again. At that moment in time, her spiritual blindness was healed and she received living water, which led to her spiritual restoration to everlasting life.

- 38 Keener (1993: *ad loc*) argues that her use of the regular title "Prophet" in reference to Jesus illustrates her inadequate faith (cf. 4:44; 6:14; 7:40; 9:17). He further mentions that the Samaritans were not waiting for just any prophet, but for the greatest prophet of all times, one like Moses (Dt 18:15–18; cf. also Jn 4:25). But according to John's theology, such faith seems insufficient (Kok 2010).
- 39 See Thyen (2005:256), who reasons: "Denn mit der Qualifikation Jesus als ‚Prophet‘ zeigt die Samaritanerin, dass sie auf dem Wege ist zu begreifen . . . , und mit der prophetischen *Sendung* Jesu erkennt sie, wie ihre folgende Frage zeigt, zugleich seine religiöse Kompetenz und Gottesnähe an . . ." Thyen goes further and alleges that the Samaritans rejected the prophetic books. The only prophet they recognised was the one who would return (Dt 18:15–18). According to Thyen, the woman judged Jesus to be simply another Jewish prophet (Thyen 2005:256). For these reasons, Thyen's view can not be upheld: By saying "When he comes, he will reveal everything to us" (cf. 4:25), the woman expresses the nature of the Samaritan Messiah-expectation. In 4:16, Jesus reveals himself by declaring that he is indeed the expected Messiah. He then discloses to her his supernatural knowledge of her life. She subsequently testifies to *that* experience. His knowledge of certain aspects of her life convinces her that he is not just an ordinary man, but that he should be associated with the long-awaited (Samaritan) Messiah. The woman then leaves her pitcher behind as she hurries back to share her message with other Samaritans. In her testimony, she announces that this man pointed out certain truths about her life and then makes the connection that he is (perhaps) the expected Messiah—the Christ. Later on,

Jesus here illuminates the woman's spiritual eyes and renders her spirit (being) receptive (cf. 3:3). All of a sudden, she is able to experience something novel and unexpected to such a degree that she later relates the coming of the *Messiah* with this transformative interaction (revelation) with *Jesus* (4:25—οἶδα ὅτι Μεσσίας ἐρχεται ὁ λεγόμενος χριστός· ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, ἀναγγελεῖ ἡμῖν ἅπαντα). To this, Jesus could immediately respond:⁴⁰ ἐγώ εἰμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι (4:26).⁴¹ Thus, Jesus reveals himself (cf. ἐγώ εἰμι in 4:26) to her within the relative boundaries created by the conversation. Nevertheless, Jesus reveals himself to such an extent that it opens up possibilities of associating Jesus directly with the coming of the promised Messiah.

7.6.4 *The Samaritan Woman becomes a Faithful Witness*

The disciples are re-introduced in the next act (4:27), as if they were interrupting the conversation (Smith 1999:118), and the woman leaves the scene as she returns to her small town (4:28), where she testifies to her experience (cf. 4:29—μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ χριστός; 4:39—μαρτυρούσης), i.e. the transformative interaction (4:28,39) she underwent (Kok 2010).⁴² This testimony (cf. 4:39—μαρτυρούσης) serves not only as a 'miracle-sign' for the Samaritan woman, but becomes a personal testimony that ultimately convinces others of Jesus' true identity (cf. 4:39; see Culpepper 1983:91; Edwards 2004:60; Morris 1975:283).⁴³ The Samaritan woman initially recognised Jesus only as a Judean,

many Samaritans start believing because of her witness. They believe in Jesus not because of her "faithlessness" (her doubt concerning whether or not he truly is the Messiah), but because of her credible and trustworthy conversion, which is related to sincere faith. In John's Gospel, a person can only believe if he is reborn (3:3), thereby receiving the privilege to be called a child of God (1:12—ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι).

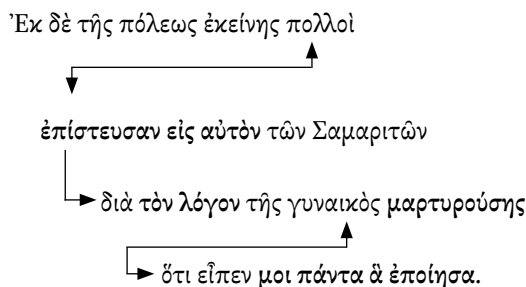
40 Here we find the first self-revelatory ἐγώ εἰμι in John's gospel, spoken/revealed by Jesus himself (See also Smith 1999:118).

41 According to Van der Watt (2000a: *ad loc*), it is ironic that the woman says that the Messiah will reveal everything when he comes. If Jesus were truly the Messiah, she had just received the answer and revelation of truth. Then Jesus confirms in his own words that he is indeed the Messiah (4:26), the gift from God (4:10). Jesus now places her in front of the turning point (of reform) – she must make a life-changing choice, or not. The subsequent verses clearly show that she made the right choice, to such a degree that she becomes the first witness to the Samaritans. In this narrative, it seems as though the Samaritans were not only touched by visible miracles and signs (cf. 2:23; 7:31; 10:42; 11:45; 12:42), but also the life-changing witness of the Samaritan woman.

42 According to Jamieson et al. (1997: *ad loc*), "The living water was already beginning to spring up within her."

43 Keener (1993: *ad loc*) rightly claims that the woman's witness is reminiscent of the way in which Philip testified (1:46). Culpepper (1983:91) affirms that the woman came to faith:

but is soon convinced that he is a prophet. Eventually, the woman irrefutably identifies Jesus as the Messiah (Hindson et al. 1997: *ad loc*; Wengst 2000:172).⁴⁴ In this narrative, as argued elsewhere (Kok 2010:184), the progressive degrees of development culminate in a properly-Johannine testimony of the true identity of Jesus. Wengst (2000:184) is therefore correct when he supposes: “Das Zeugnis der Frau weckt also Glauben, und es entsteht Gemeinde als neue Sozialität.” This is confirmed by 4:39 as follows as I have illustrated elsewhere (see Kok 2010; as well as Kok and Niemandt 2009):



The text makes it clear that the Samaritans start believing in Jesus (πολλοὶ ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτὸν),⁴⁵ on the basis of (cf. preposition διὰ taking accusative [thus on account of]) the woman's testimony (τὸν λόγον τῆς γυναικὸς μαρτυροῦσης) (As I have argued in Kok 2010).⁴⁶ The transformative interaction

“The Samaritan woman hails him as the Christ, and many in her village say he is the ‘savior of the world’ (4:29, 39–42).” Cf. also Koester (1990:665–680).

44 It therefore highlights, according to Hindson & Kroll (1997:2086), the fact that there was definite development in her faith, to the extent that she eventually becomes a true ‘believer’ in the Johannine sense of the word.

45 Bernard (1953:160) reasons that πολλοὶ ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτὸν was a Johannine favourite, and appears no less than six times in the Gospel according to John (cf. Jn 2:23; 7:31; 8:30; 10:42; 11:45; 12:42). He postulates that “The aorist seems to indicate a definite, but not necessarily lasting, movement of faith evoked by special words or deeds of Jesus.”

46 Similarly, Robertson (1997: *ad loc*) opines that the Samaritan woman is already convinced (verse 26v.), but that she poses the question tentatively to avoid opposition. Hence, she avoids using οὐκ and replaces it with μητι. By doing that, she excites the Samaritans’ curiosity. See also Brown (1966:174–175), who claims that the woman’s use of the word λόγον should be differentiated from Jesus’ use thereof, seeing as there is a qualitative difference between the faith produced by Jesus’ λόγον (cf. 4:41) and the faith produced by the woman’s λόγον. Brown is indeed correct, but the question is: on what level does the qualitative difference lie? Surely, it does not mean that a person who received ‘second-hand’ λόγον through the witness of another believer has an erroneous or qualitatively inferior type of faith compared to those whose faith was a result of direct interaction with

between herself and Jesus, during which Jesus revealed her life's truth, something the *Taheb* would have been able to do (See Macdonald 1964), qualifies her as a faithful witness (See Culpepper 1993:91; Wengst 2000:184).⁴⁷ According to Barclay (2000:172), the interaction between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is a good example of Jesus' saving power. He argues that the town where she lived would undeniably have labelled her a woman that has crossed the boundaries of reform; yet, Jesus saves and restores her; and enables her to break loose from her past and her old habits, thereby creating possibilities for the woman of a new socio-religious existence. Against this background, there is naturally no better title with which to describe Jesus, other than “ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου” (cf. 4:42).

This woman's faith reminds one of the type of faith in John that saves people and make them part of God's family (1:12; 5:24). In John, as we have already mentioned, 'salvation faith' (πιστεύω and its 98 appearances) comprises not only of the acceptance of Jesus as the Son of God, but also includes the existential influence and determination thereof on people's deeds—deeds that flow inextricably from the former (Van der Watt 2005:121). It seems as though the woman and the Samaritans in the narrative (cf. 4:42) ultimately surrenders to true (saving) faith in Jesus, the source of living water. In John, believers become reborn children of God (1:12; 3:3), cross over from death to life (5:24), and receive spiritual healing and restoration of their spiritual blindness (9:41; 12:40). The interaction of the Samaritan woman with Jesus ultimately develops into a remarkable transformative interaction that leads to her rebirth (3:3), spiritual healing—and *the reorientation and re-presentation of her reality*. Everything changes abruptly for the Samaritan woman, even her possibilities for eternal existence in God's family (cf. 1:12) (See Wengst 2000:180–181).⁴⁸ Whosoever listens to what Jesus has to say, and believes in the God who sent

Jesus. In John 17, Jesus prays for those who will come to faith in the future as a result of secondary witness about him (cf. 17:20—Οὐ περὶ τούτων δὲ ἔρωτῶ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ τῶν πιστευόντων διὰ τοῦ λόγου αὐτῶν εἰς ἐμέ). Yet, Jesus clearly states that a certain unity exists between the Father, the Son and believers (cf. 17:21—ἵνα πάντες ἐν ὧσιν, καθὼς σύ, πάτερ, ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ ἐγὼ ἐν σοί, ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἡμῖν ὧσιν, ἵνα ὁ κόσμος πιστεύῃ ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας).

47 According to Thyen (2005:282), the faith of the Samaritans is not only temporary (*verläufiger*). Smith (1999:121) believes that the Samaritan woman's testimony (cf. 4:17–18, 290) led many Samaritans to faith, but only on the basis of the conversion she underwent as a result of a miracle, which she now conveys to them.

48 Wengst (2000:180–181) notes: “In der Gemeinde fanden Menschen neue Lebensmöglichkeiten, deren bedrücktes Leben perspektivlos erschien, die durch Lebensbrüche hindurchgegangen waren. Sie fanden in geteilten Leben in der Gemeinde erfülltes Leben.”

Jesus, already has eternal life in the present (5:24—Present Indicative Active—ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον). He or she is not condemned (εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται—Present Indicative Middle), but has already crossed over from death to life (Perfect Indicative Active—μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν).

In their subsequent interaction with Jesus, more Samaritans came to faith in him after hearing his words for themselves (4:41—καὶ πολλῶ πλείους ἐπίστευσαν διὰ τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ). Now they believed not because of the woman's testimony, but because of their firsthand experiences of Jesus (4:42—ὅτι οὐκέτι διὰ τὴν σὴν λαλίαν πιστεύομεν). Jesus, and his words, touched their inner beings to the extent that their spiritual eyes and ears were opened and healed (See Bernard 1953:160). This in turn enabled them to see and recognise the true reality (αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκηκόαμεν καὶ οἶδαμεν), i.e. that Jesus truly is the saviour of the world (ἀληθῶς ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου—4:41).⁴⁹ Bernard (1953:161) argues that the initial phases of faith can be induced by the testimonies of others, but that complete and lasting faith in Jesus only realises within the sphere of personal contact and fellowship with the living Christ. Hence, we can rightly refer to this narrative as the mission to the Samaritans (Bernard 1953:161).⁵⁰

7.7 Jesus is the Source of Living Water

This whole narrative revolves around the important truth that Jesus is the source of Living Water and that the hour is at hand (cf. 4:21; 5:25, 28; 16:2; 32) when true believers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in Truth, as is the Father's wish (4:23). The consequence of this truth is that the Father will be worshipped neither on this mountain (Gerizzim), nor in Jerusalem. The reason is clear: There is a new source of life. God has changed his address. The presence of God is now to be found wherever Jesus is. Just as the purification of the temple (cf. Jn 2:13–21) indicates a contrast between the old temple and the new temple, which is now to be located wherever Jesus is, worshipping at Gerizzim is also replaced by a new kind of worship, as presented in the new dispensation by Christ and the Spirit (Beasley-Murray 2002:58). *The determining question in*

49 Brown (1966:185) rightly points to the fact that “Nicodemus, the rabbi of Jerusalem, could not understand Jesus’ message that God had sent the Son into the world so that the world might be saved through him (iii 17); yet the peasants of Samaria readily come to know that Jesus is really the Saviour of the world.”

50 In the Johannine community, people come to faith on the basis of the words of those who testify about Jesus.

John revolves around the locality of the true centre: Where, and with whom is God to be found? (Kok 2010).

**7.7.1 *Re-presentation and Reorientation: Where, and with Whom is God?*
(4:19–26)⁵¹**

For Jesus to be able to grant life, God's active involvement and presence with him is a necessity (also argued elsewhere; see Kok 2009:179). According to Van der Watt (2005:102), the decisive question in John (and the subsequent conflict in the Gospel) does indeed revolve around the question concerning the socio-religious centre: "where and with whom is God?"⁵² The disciples of Jesus and the disciples of Moses, respectively, give opposing answers to this question, even though both groups claim allegiance to the very same God (Van der Watt 2005:103).⁵³ Jesus remarks during his interaction with the Samaritan woman: "ὁμοίως προσκυνεῖτε ὃ οὐκ οἴδατε ἡμεῖς προσκυνούμεν ὃ οἶδαμεν, ὅτι ἡ σωτηρία ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν").⁵⁴ It was argued above that the Samaritans saw themselves as the true Israel, heirs of God's promises to Israel, who received the authentic version of the Pentateuch directly from Moses (See Beasley-Murray 2002:60). As such, the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman has to do with the problem surrounding the authentic worship of the true God (cf. 4:19–24). In this specific narrative, three divergent groups are presented. Each group stubbornly holds not only that they worship the true God

51 See Kok (2010) and acknowledgements section of the book.

52 Beasley-Murray (2002:61) says: "The woman's recognition of Jesus as a prophet leads her to raise the most burning issue between Samaritans and Jews, namely the place where God should be worshipped. The command in Deut 12:1–14 to worship God in the place that he will show follows the command to pronounce a blessing from Mt. Gerizim and a curse from Mt. Ebal (Deut 11:29). In the Samaritan Pentateuch of Deut 27:3 the place where an altar is to be built on arrival in the Promised Land is Gerizim, not Ebal as in the Masoretic Text [of the Old Testament] (as published in BHS). That could conceivably be right, the text possibly having been changed through anti-Samaritan motives. References in later books of the Old Testament to worship in Jerusalem would not have been viewed by the Samaritans as authoritative, since the Pentateuch alone was binding for them. In the Persian period a temple was built on Gerizim; it was destroyed by John Hyrcanus in 128 BC, but the Samaritans continued to worship on the sacred site."

53 The healing acts occur against the background of this important question and the conflict that flows from it.

54 Cf. Ashton (1991:45) for a discussion of the identity of these Jews. It is not our current purpose to discuss who these Jews were. De Boer (2001:141–157) may be correct in arguing that the Jews in John should be seen as a socio-religious group that identifies themselves as the "disciples of Moses" (cf. 9:28). The idea is to see the Johannine Jews as a fictive group in John's narrative (Van der Watt 2005:102).

in the correct manner, but also that they harbour the exclusive location where God is to be found. Obviously, these views result in the socio-religious exclusion of the other groups (cf. 10:33; 19:7 and 8:19, 24, 54–55).

7.7.2 *Jesus Brings Healing and Reconciliation*

Was it the intention of Jesus⁵⁵ to bring a new religion, or to further true faith in the God of Abraham and Moses? In my view, Jesus did not attempt to establish a new faith, but to *integrate* the Jews and the Samaritans (the world) (τὸν κόσμον—3:16) within a new centre of worship (cf. John 17) (also in Kok 2010:179; Kok and Niemandt 2009). Yet, if it was not the intention of Jesus to establish a new God or a new religion (cf. Van der Watt 2005:104), the implication is that those who reject Jesus are separated from the true God and banned from the centre—or the presence of God. They remain *spiritually blind, dead* and caught up in *sin* (cf. 5:24; 9:39–41; 12:40; See Barrett 1978:366; Carson 1991:377).

On the other hand, there is also the possibility that those who used to oppose each other could now experience healing and reconciliation in and through Jesus, who is the new centre. John 11:52 clearly explicates this reality: “καὶ οὐχ ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἔθνους μόνον ἀλλ’ ἵνα καὶ τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ διεσκορπισμένα συναγάγῃ εἰς ἓν.” Jesus, as the new centre, reconciles not only people with himself and with God (3:16), but also reconciles people with each other (4:21–24). He restores death to life and spiritual illness to spiritual wholeness (See 9:41; 12:40). In and through Jesus as the new centre of worship, he unites believing Jews and Samaritans to be part of a new combined family of the Father and the Son (1:12; See Schnackenburg 1990:1.261; Brown 1966:11). *Hence, Jesus not only offers a new centre, but also heals the brokenness and marginalisation between God and people, as well as between people themselves.* This is how God’s true reality (cf. 3:3), his plan and his new family on earth, becomes visible (cf. Jn 17). In the process, those who were formerly polarised and mutually rejected—those who suffered from the broken relationship that existed between Jew, Samaritan and gentile (cf. Jn 4:43–54; 3:16)—are restored—boundaries are (incarnationally) transcended. As I have said elsewhere (Kok 2010), by pulling the centre of worship towards himself (cf. 6:44; 12:32), Jesus not only ‘heals’ (See 9:41; 12:40), but also restores and reconciles on multi-dimensional levels (cf. 11:52; See Ps 106:37; 107:3; Is 11:12; 43:5–7; 49:5; Jr 23:3; 31:8–14; Ezk 34:11–16; 36:24–38; 37:21–28; See Köstenberger 2004:353).

55 The Jesus of history would not have attempted to bring about a new religion. He was and kept on being a Jew from the beginning to the end of his earthly life. Thus, Jesus acts according to Old Testament categories, where God himself brings about his own Rule. Here in John, Jesus confirms the Rule of God.

This reality also places the priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17 against a certain relief. Jesus there prays to the Father about the unity of the new family that he created (17:22), as well as the unity of future believers (17:20) by saying: “²²καγὼ τὴν δόξαν ἣν δέδωκας μοι δέδωκα αὐτοῖς, ἵνα ὡσιν ἐν καθῶς ἡμεῖς ἐν.²³ ἐγὼ ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ σὺ ἐν ἐμοί, ἵνα ὡσιν τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἐν, ἵνα γινώσκῃ ὁ κόσμος ὅτι σὺ με ἀπέστειλας καὶ ἡγάπησας αὐτοὺς καθὼς ἐμέ ἡγάπησας” (cf. also 15:9). Just like the words of Jesus lead to life (cf. also ζῶσποιεῖ in 5:21 and 6:63), so the words of the disciples, which are synonymous with the words of Jesus, also (in future will) lead people to life and spiritual healing (cf. 9:41; 12:50).

In John 17:20–21, Jesus portrays the new family’s novel (or true) symbolic universe over against the traditional Jewish symbolic world, by making use of a concentric argument (Haenchen 1980:506–508). God is the centre, just as with the Jewish symbolic world, but is now followed by Jesus and then by believers (See also 15:4). This new symbolic universe differs from the Jewish one in the sense that Jesus is intimately related to the centre (God) and that the progressive degrees of holiness is replaced by a three-dimensional paradigm of unity (Kok 2010:181). Fundamentally, this unity is founded on love (20:26), closely bound or related to revelation (1:18; 2:25). It can further be argued that this unity within the family of God is revealed within the context of love (15:9; contra 5:42) (Kok 2010:180). In a different passage (13:34; cf. also 13:1–17), Jesus utilises the same argument: “³⁴Ἐντολὴν καινὴν δίδωμι ὑμῖν, ἵνα ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους, καθὼς ἡγάπησα ὑμᾶς ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους” (13:34). In John, the symbolic universe of the Jews is *re-presented* and depicted against the background of the creation of a new faith-community or family (cf. 1:12). Jesus is the centre where God is present (Kok 2010:180). Wherever Jesus might be, there God will be found, which will also be the space where love and unity (within the matrix of the family of God) that Jesus creates will be found (Barrett 1978:216; Carson 1991:205; Morris 1995:203–204). This very same love of God, originally motivated the sending of the Son (3:16—οὕτως γὰρ ἡγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν). This exact same love was directed at the healing and restoration of the multi-dimensional brokenness that existed even before the incarnation of the Son which God addressed in and through Jesus (See Schnackenburg 1990:1.399; Haenchen 1980:224–225).

7.8 Summary and Concluding Remarks

In John, God moves from the local and the materialistic (temple) to the ‘glocal’ (global as well as local) and the spiritual. With the term ‘glocal’ it is meant that God will be both localised (or present) wherever Jesus is, and

‘globalised’ in the sense that Jesus is to be found not only with Jews, but also with Samaritans (4:1–42) and even gentiles (3:16 ἡγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον; See possibly also 10:16—ἀλλὰ πρόβατα; 4:43–54; 7:35; 12:20). Wherever Jesus is, one may expect to find the Father and the life he bestows (cf. the healing acts). It clearly follows from this narrative that it was not only the broken relationship between the Samaritan woman and God that was restored. God’s new family also gave birth to the *potential restoration* of a broken relationship between the Samaritans and the Jews (1:12). In and through Jesus as new form of unity and reconciliation is potentially to be found. This narrative *re-presents reality* to such an extent that *reconciliation* between Jew and Samaritan becomes a viable possibility. This becomes possible the instant Jesus becomes the new (“glocal”) centre through faith and love (17:23). Through faith, one is reborn and accepted into the new family of the King (Van der Watt 2000b). In other words, John’s soteriology implies and leads to resocialisation⁵⁶ and reconciliation (Van der Watt 2005:123). In this way, newly restored and reconciled existential realities are (re)presented, both on horizontal (between people/nations mutually) and vertical (between people and God) levels simultaneously.

The interaction of Jesus with the Samaritan woman is therefore, within John’s symbolic universe, more than just a communicative interaction—it can be seen specifically as a transformative interaction, a prototype of a *restorative hermeneutic of re-presentation*, or an act of healing.⁵⁷ This healing act serves as a means (or a “miracle-sign”) through which to illustrate both that Jesus is the Messiah, and that he is the true centre of worship, the source of Living Water, of Life itself (cf. 1:4).

As such, this narrative aids the main goal of the gospel (20:30–31), which is to serve as a sign that Jesus truly is the Son of God and the source of life, the new (true)⁵⁸ temple (cf. 2:17–22). Those who believe this truth will not only

56 The ancient Mediterranean person was always part of a certain *οἶκος* (Roberts 1984:62). When a person is born into a specific family, he becomes a participating member of that family, especially on a social level (Van der Watt 2005:123). Being born into a family, results in a certain way of life and specific patterns of behaviour, which predetermines a person’s social conduct (Neyrey 1995:143; 1991:28; Van der Watt 2005:123). In similar fashion, John makes use of this family parable to metaphorically explain what happens to an individual, a believer is *born again into* the family of God. To form part of this new family circle means to resocialise and to conform to the values of this new family (Van der Watt 2005:124).

57 Healing act is understood metaphorically.

58 ‘New’ temple is perhaps not the right word. The word ‘true’ temple fits better in a Johannine context.

receive eternal life (20:30–31), but also the healing and restoration of their spiritual death (5:24) and blindness (9:41; 12:40).⁵⁹ In such a manner, John's narrative about Jesus and the Samaritan woman becomes a story of healing and restoration on a spiritual level. As such, it certainly seems as though scholars who contemplate healing in John should also consider, as part of their reflection, the category of spiritual healing or restoration.

59 Whoever has the Son, also has the Father—cf. 1 John. See John 5—the Father is in Me and I am in the Father.

The Resurrection of Jesus as Culminating Act of Healing and Restoration

The current chapter will argue that John's version of the resurrection of Jesus should be seen as a σημεῖον which represents both the culminating act of healing in that Gospel and the hermeneutical key for understanding the other σημεία in John.

The Resurrection as σημεῖον

The Author of the Fourth Gospel clearly summarises the purpose of the Gospel in John 20:30–31: “Πολλά μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄλλα σημεῖα ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐνώπιον τῶν μαθητῶν [αὐτοῦ], ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ· 31 ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται ἵνα πιστεύ[ς]ητε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ.¹ John 20:30–31 explains, as argued earlier in the book, that there were a number of other narratives available he could also have used to reach this *goal*, namely that Jesus was sent by God as the Son of God and that people could, by believing this, receive eternal life (See Brown 1984:1055–1061; Carson 1991:660–661; Haenchen 1980:574–575). Nonetheless, John made a selection from all the material at his disposal and deliberately chose to portray the purpose of his Gospel by representing some of the available material as σημεῖα (Köstenberger 2004:581).² Haenchen (1980:575) correctly states: “Aber diese Auswahl, welche das Buch enthält, soll zum Glauben an den Gottessohn führen”.

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- 1 Translation of John 20:30–31: “³⁰ And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: ³¹ But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” See Keener (2003:1213), as well as Ridderbos (1997:650).
 - 2 Brown (1984:1059) notices: “The signs Jesus performed during his ministry revealed in an anticipatory manner his glory and his power to give eternal life. The sign of the post-resurrectional period reveals that the work of the hour has been completed, that Jesus is glorified and now gives eternal life. Both those who saw these signs and those who read them must believe in order to receive this life.”

In a recent³ article,⁴ Van Belle (2006) refers to his presidential address at the Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense concerning “The Death of Jesus of the Fourth Gospel.” In this article he asks the question: “... [W]hether it could be agreed that the cross was by distinction the sign in the Gospel of John?” Put differently, Van Belle wants to know if it is acceptable to speak of the “cross as sign” in the context of John’s “theology of the sign” (cf. 20:30–31 σημεῖα ἐποίησεν).

The context of this question is one where it is not, according to Van Belle, a popular view among scholars. Thus, he observes: “It appears that the majority of exegetes do not defend reading in the ‘to perform signs’ the plausibility that John is also referring to the passion and death of Christ.” He argues in the article just mentioned, that the cross should be seen as *the* culminating sign in the Gospel.⁵ He also declares: “Furthermore, in his consequently thought through ‘theology of the signs’, John saw the death of Jesus as the climax and consequence of the incarnation of the only-born Son in whom we as believers can behold the ‘glory’ of the Lord” (Van Belle 2006:5).

Principally, Van Belle, sees John’s theology as a *theologia incarnationis* (cf. 1:14). In such a theological approach, the ‘incarnation’ motive plays a vital role in the context of the ‘Christological Mission’ motif. The Father’s commission of the Son is the point of departure for the pre-existential Christology and serves as an important aspect in the revelation of God to the world.⁶ Since the Son comes ‘from above,’ he mediates certain ‘supernatural’ elements, like qualitative existential life possibilities within the Family of God. Jesus brings God’s life to those who believe. Conversely, those who reject the Son and refuse to believe, have already been judged.

3 “Recent” in relation to the time the Afrikaans version of the book was written (2005–2008).

4 The theme of the article: “Glorification through Incarnation and Humiliation in the Fourth Gospel.” The theme of the address at the *Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense* was: “The Death of Jesus of the Fourth Gospel.”

5 In short, he refers to the following examples: He argues that a similar vocabulary is used in both the passion narrative and the miracle narratives: ‘hour’ (ῥα); ‘glorify’ (δόξα/δοξαζω); ‘believe’ (πιστώ); ‘see’. Secondly, the passion narrative is intrinsically connected to a discourse text. The passion and death of Jesus are contextualised by the preceding farewell discourse and the Prayer of the High Priest (13:1–17, 25). Thirdly, the author uses the same literary techniques in the passion narrative as in the miracle narratives: 1) Highlighting the material world as expression of the incarnation of Jesus; 2) Emphasising Jesus’ supernatural abilities; 3) The presence of the same Christological titles, namely Messiah or Christ, the true king and prophet, as well as the Son of God and the Son of Man. According to Van Belle, this emphasis on the literary similarities between the miracle- and passion narratives is but one of the reasons conveyed by the so-called “Louvain Hypothesis.”

6 For perspectives on Christology, See Van Belle, Van der Watt & Maritz (2005).

Within the ‘incarnation motive’, there are references to the glory (δόξα) and the fullness of grace and truth (πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας), which are connected to the incarnation (cf. 1:14). Naturally, the resulting question becomes: How does John integrate the death of Jesus with the incarnation motive and how is it possible to integrate ‘glory’ (δόξα) with the ‘crucified’?

John does not ignore the brutality and reality of the cross, but uses literary techniques to expose the symbolic dimensions and the resulting deeper spiritual meaning of that reality. Material elements, then, serve as instruments or vehicles through which spiritual elements can be revealed: John views the cross as a sign of salvation, as is clear from 3:14–15; (cf. 8:28 and 12:34, as well as 3:13–21): “¹⁴ καὶ καθὼς Μωϋσῆς ὑψώσεν τὸν ὄφιν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, οὕτως ὑψωθῆναι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ¹⁵ ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐν αὐτῷ ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον.”⁷ This passage in John refers to Numbers 21:4–9 where the Israelites were bitten by poisonous snakes.⁸ They were encouraged to look at a snake on a copper pole in order to receive healing or life. The author of the Gospel compares this to Jesus, the Son of Man, who has to be elevated. The elevation of Jesus represents the culmination of Jesus’ earthly life. Jesus gives his life in order that those who believe in him can live forever (soteriological focus).

In light of this, Van Belle (2006:7) is correct when he observes that the miracle narratives in the Gospel repeatedly refer to the symbolic nature in which Jesus gives life, as was also shown throughout in this book. He argues that the cross is also a symbolic sign of life in 3:14–15—“Jesus dies in order to give life . . .” Van Belle also indicates that ‘see’ and ‘believe’ repeatedly occurs in the miracle narratives and similarly in the context of the cross in 3:14–15. As such, the cross should also be seen as a sign (σημεῖα) in the Gospel (See also Carson 1991:661). However, he goes further and argues that the cross should be seen as *the* culminating sign in the Gospel. He points out that another passage that illuminates the symbolic meaning of the crucifixion is John 19:34, which mentions the blood and water that came from Jesus’ side after the soldier stabbed him with a spear. Van Belle argues that these elements should also be seen as signs since the words ‘see’ and ‘believe’ explicitly appear in this context (cf. 19:35). This is how he explicates the passage:

In the first aside (19:35) the author states: “He who saw (ὁ ἑωρακώς) this has testified (μεμαρτύρηκεν), so that you also may believe (πιστεῦ[ς]ητε). His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.” In the third aside (19:37) which contains the second allusion to the Scriptures, we

7 Translation: International Standard Version: “Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”

8 Cf. Frey (1994b:153–205).

read: "And again another passage of scripture says, "They will look (Ὡψονταί) on the one they have pierced".

VAN BELLE 2006:9

John 7:37 draws from Zechariah 12:10, which deals with the liberation of Jerusalem by Jahweh from the grips of their enemies (See also Ps 113–118; Neh 8:18). References are made to the mysterious figure who was not accepted by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but who will be exalted as king on Jahweh's day of salvation. Zechariah 12:10–12 (KJV) states: *"¹⁰And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. ¹¹In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. ¹²And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart . . ."* Immediately after this, Zechariah 13:1 continues:— *"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness"* [KJV].

Even though Jesus was despised and crucified by his own people, God made him the source of life (Jn 7:38). The crucifixion or elevation of Christ becomes the sign of *healing* and *life* and the *purification* Zechariah 13:1 speaks about. Consider also the relationship between sin and uncleanness and the purification brought on by the crucifixion of Jesus, which results in true life.

We can agree with Van Belle that the cross should be seen as a sign and even as *the* sign in the Gospel, but subject to certain conditions. It is my opinion that Van Belle undervalues the resurrection and the meaning it projects onto the cross, as well as the explicit association/link John makes between the crucifixion and the resurrection.

Within the context of the resurrection, it is interesting to reflect on the features of a sign that are indeed present at critical stages in the post-resurrection context of the Gospel. Thus, the elements of 'see' and 'believe' appear at the end of the Gospel in the context where Thomas confesses his belief in the resurrected Christ. It is followed by the pronouncement concerning those who did not see, but still believed (Jn 20:28–29). Van Belle extols those events in the Gospel surrounding the crucifixion, but does not develop the role of the resurrection in the 'meaning' of the cross. He combines the sign of the cross with life, but does not associate the sign of the resurrection with that same life. *It is my opinion, against Van Belle, that the sign of the cross receives life-giving meaning specifically in 'light' of the sign of the resurrection as a culminating act of healing* (cf. Jn 10:17–18).

Van Belle's junior colleague at the time, Petrus Maritz, correctly indicates that John's stylistic wordplay, in combination with his dramatic technique of delay, could illuminate the subject of the cross as a sign (2006:10). My conviction is that the same holds true of the resurrection as a sign. In what follows, I will try to assimilate the convictions of Maritz and Van Belle to my own and also to illustrate why Van Belle's opinion of the sign of the cross cannot be understood if it is disjoined from the sign of the resurrection.

Van Belle (2006:11) states: "[I]n narrating each miracle the evangelist stresses the 'solidly material aspect', the factuality, the reality of the signs . . . By narrating the reality of Jesus' deeds the evangelist makes Jesus' *δόξα* visible, and thus, the signs eminently illustrate the incarnation of the Logos (1:14)." Each of John's miracles highlights the extraordinary quality thereof:

1. The first miracle at Cana does not only illustrate the extraordinary nature of the act in reference to its quantity, but particularly to its quality (cf. 2:9–10). The miracle is initially delayed when Jesus states that his hour has not yet arrived; In this context the ordinary, material (water) is transformed into wine of superior quality.⁹ In turn, this miracle represents a certain spiritual-symbolic meaning.
2. In the second Cana miracle, Jesus heals the son of a nobleman from a distance. Jesus speaks life-giving words. Although the miracle happened at the exact time that Jesus spoke those words, the realisation thereof for the nobleman, is delayed until after it was announced to him as being fulfilled. The bleak and broken outlook of the son that had death knocking on his door is transformed to life. Eventually, this material (physical) healing or physical recovery led to spiritual healing and spiritual recovery. Symbolically speaking, faith leads to the type of qualitative existential possibilities that Jesus came to bring (cf. 4:51–53).
3. Jesus speaks and the man that had been lame for thirty-eight years recovers immediately. Once again, the broken, material reality (his biomedical state of being) is transformed into life-giving possibilities (cf. 5:5, 8–9). The possible symbolic interpretation points to those who were touched by Jesus and saw his miracles, but still opted to side with the Jews.
4. In John 6, Jesus transforms five pieces of bread and two fishes into enough food to feed thousands. The apparent bleakness of the material is transformed into abundance, a sign that Jesus is the bread of life.
5. In 6:22–25 Jesus walks on water (material) and illustrates the extraordinary nature of his might (spiritual)—symbolic of the fact that he is in control of nature.

9 Cf. Barnhart (1993).

6. Jesus heals a man who was born blind in John 9. The blind man's apparent bleak view of the future results in transformed possibilities for life with the restoration of his physical sight. Similarly, spiritual blindness and the fact that Jesus transforms those who are spiritually blind by enabling them to really see, is indicated symbolically. Those who see are the very same ones who believe and they receive possibilities for spiritual life within the family of God.
7. In John 11, the impossibly bleak outlook of Lazarus, who had been dead for four days, is transformed when Jesus resurrects him from the dead. John 11:25 explains the symbolic meaning of the healing act: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live . . ."
8. John 21:1–14 tells of the last miracle, where Jesus transforms the bleakness of a failed fishing expedition into a success story that surpasses all human expectations.

The following pattern (*heuristic category*) can be extracted from the miracles: 1) A negative material component representative of a situation of loss or brokenness, crisis and disorientation of some sort is always present, like the presence of death and the loss of qualitative existential possibilities in the case of the healing-miracles; 2) Jesus intervenes in the midst of this apparent bleakness or hopelessness as transforming agent of God and transforms the material via the recreation of qualitative possibilities for life; The situation of disorientation makes way for a situation of reorientation. 3) The new situation repeatedly refers to a larger analogous spiritual truth, wherein the brokenness will be recreated into spiritual possibilities for life.

Within the context of the other signs, it is clear why Van Belle's conceptualisation of the cross as sign cannot be appreciated fully without taking full account of the role of the resurrection. Let me explain:

The crucifixion is an example of brokenness, bleakness, hopelessness and the loss of existential possibilities. On its own, it is not a sign, just as the death of Lazarus is not a sign (σημεῖα) if taken in isolation. The Lazarus narrative becomes σημεῖα only when the transforming, life-creating reality steps in and Lazarus is resurrected from the dead. The blindness of the blind man is no σημεῖα in and of itself. The burden with which the blind man is born becomes σημεῖα only at the very moment that Jesus restores his blindness and transforms his bleakness into life-creating potentiality. In a similar vein, it can be argued that the crucifixion becomes σημεῖα only if seen in the light of the transforming, life-creating reality of the resurrection, when the brokenness is healed and the bleakness (or hopelessness) of death is replaced by new life. The cross, therefore, only makes sense and becomes a σημεῖα when viewed through the lens of the resurrection (cf. Jn 10:17–18, which will be discussed below).

Van Belle is correct in interpreting the cross as *the* sign in the Gospel, but then only if it is seen in the light—or through the lens of the resurrection. Accordingly, the resurrection event plays a vital theological role and becomes, by implication, the culminating healing-miracle/act in the Gospel. The symbolic meaning thereof is that Jesus is indeed the essential embodiment of life in abundance. In the Fourth Gospel, the resurrection becomes the essential sign that points toward the fact that Jesus has power over life and death, which makes him the source of life itself. If he managed to overcome death, he must be the Son of God who was sent by God. In the light of the resurrection, the shame associated with the cross is replaced by glory (δόξα). When the crucifixion is viewed from the vantage point of the resurrection, the bleakness of the cross is transformed into a symbol of life. The cross becomes important only because it is the instrument through which glory is revealed. He who sees the cross, sees the empty tomb and the proof of qualitative existential possibilities of life within the family of the King.

The foregoing argument runs the risk of operating on the level of ‘interpretation’ only without being true to John’s theology and text. In other words, the important question to address is whether the text itself views the crucifixion and resurrection as an inseparable unity. In what follows, the preceding argument will be deepened by arguing that the Johannine text itself has an intrinsically unified view of the crucifixion and resurrection.

8.1 The Inseparable Theological Relationship between the Cross and the Resurrection in John

For John, the cross, resurrection and ascension are inseparably connected (cf. the discussion later on Jn 10:17–18)¹⁰ Kysar (1986:163–164) agrees and states that: “In John the crucifixion and resurrection are a single event, inseparably bound together.” On the cross, Jesus is glorified, his true identity is revealed (Schnelle 1998:157)¹¹ (Jn 8:28), and he draws towards him those belonging

10 Van der Watt (2000a: *ad loc*) states: “For him the cross, burial, resurrection and even the outpouring of the Spirit are different facets of one important integrated event (which we refer to as the ‘cross event/s’) which have changed the course of history. These events are treated in a close relationship with each other, without collapsing the different events into undistinguishable whole.” Wilckens (1998:340–341) uses words like ‘*ineinsgesehen*’ and ‘*ineinsfallen*’ when contemplating the relationship between the crucifixion and resurrection.

11 Kysar (1986:140) states: “The cross is the decisive event which manifests Jesus’ true identity.” Schnelle (1998:157) is thus correct when saying that: “Die Erhöhung hat für Johannes

to him (12:31–32;¹² 3:14–15; See Schnackenburg 1971:492–493; Gnllka 1983:29; Schnelle 1998:74).¹³ Maier (1984:378) is correct when mentioning the following in his commentary on 8:28–29:

Mann muss freilich auch sehen, dass ‘Erhöhen’ ein doppelsinniger Ausdruck ist. Es bedeutet nicht nur ‘Hinaufhängen ans Kreuz’, sondern auch ‘Erhöhen zu Gott in göttliche Machstellung. Letzteres geschieht durch Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt, die also ebenfalls mit dem ‘Erhöhen’ prophezeit sind.

MAIER 1984:378

In his commentary on John 2:18–22, van Houwelingen (1997:87) also confirms the theological unity of the death and the resurrection of Jesus and comments that: “Het afbreken en herbouwen duidde op het doden én het opwekking van zijn lichaam.”¹⁴

For John, the cross is not a *σάρανδαλον* (contra cf. 1 Cor 1:18vv.; Acts 17:32). Actually, John sees the cross,¹⁵ in accordance with the healing acts, as a *σημεῖον* (2:18), that points towards a larger spiritual truth.¹⁶ For John, the cross¹⁷ is drawn into the *δόξα* sphere or realm (cf. also 3:14; 8:28; 12:23–24, 32; 13:31; 17:1; See Schnackenburg 1990:352)¹⁸ on the basis of and seen through the (spiritual) light of the resurrection.

Offenbarungscharakter; sie zeigt, dass Jesus der Sohn Gottes ist, weil sich am Kreuz die Liebe Gottes zur Welt offenbart (vgl. Joh 3,16).”

- 12 Maier (1986:42) says: “Über die Konsequenz seiner Auferstehung sagt Jesus: ‘Und ich, wenn ich von der Erde erhöht werde, werde alle zu mir ziehen. Das Erhöht werden von der Erde’ is Tod und Auferweckung in einem (vgl. 3,14; 8,28).”
- 13 The cross, for Schnackenburg (1971:493), is the place where the glory of Jesus is revealed: “Das Kreuz ist für Joh schon so sehr Ort der Verherrlichung und Beginn der Heilsherrschaft Jesu (vgl. 19, 37), dass Jesus nicht nur zu sich ans Kreuz, sondern auch in den himmlischen Bereich zieht”.
- 14 See Köstenberger (2004:307–308), who fails to devote sufficient attention to the inseparable unity between the death and resurrection of Jesus in his discussion of Jn 10:17–18.
- 15 See Knöppler (1994) for information on the theology of the cross.
- 16 See Green (1988:105) for a discussion on the relationship between the passion narratives of the Synoptic Gospels and John respectively.
- 17 See, for example, Van der Watt (1995:142–158). See also Bultmann (1984), who integrates the events surrounding the crucifixion into the motive of incarnation. Also see Rahner (1998:62).
- 18 Some scholars argue that, unlike Paul, John doesn’t emphasise the value of the cross with regard to salvation and reconciliation. According to them, the cross-theology of John is developed around the themes of Jesus’ regal might, glorification, God’s eschatological plan and loving (cf. also 10:15).

According to Van der Watt (2000a: *ad loc*), in John, the cross can be interpreted in two ways:¹⁹ 1) Through unbelieving human eyes;²⁰ or 2) Through the spiritual eyes of faith.²¹

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- 19 The basic argumentation of Van der Watt (2000a: *ad loc*) is brought into play here (and forms the basis of this argument) and I will refrain from constantly referring to him in this section.
- 20 The Jews stand antagonistically against Jesus, who, according to them, disregards the cultic practices of the time. He heals on the Sabbath (5:18) and defiles the Temple (2:13–22). According to Lincoln (2005:198), the Jews already decided to kill Jesus in the context of 5:18: “In this way the opposition is depicted as having already determined the verdict in this controversy or trial at its outset.” (cf. 5:18- διὰ τοῦτο οὖν μᾶλλον ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀποκτεῖναι, ὅτι οὐ μόνον ἔλυεν τὸ σάββατον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πατέρα ἴδιον ἔλεγεν τὸν θεὸν Ἰσὺν ἑαυτὸν ποιῶν τῷ θεῷ). In their eyes, Jesus renders himself guilty of blasphemy (βλασφημίας). For them, Jesus was an ordinary human being (10:33—καὶ ὅτι σὺ ἄνθρωπος ὢν ποιεῖς σεαυτὸν θεόν), who equated himself not only with the sent Son of God, but also, as a result, with God himself (5:17–18; ἀλλὰ καὶ πατέρα ἴδιον ἔλεγεν τὸν θεὸν Ἰσὺν ἑαυτὸν ποιῶν τῷ θεῷ. 19:7). The Jews argue that the origin of Jesus doesn't accord with the prophecies of scripture, since he is not a descendent of David and doesn't originate from Bethlehem (7:41–42). Edwards (2004:86) rightly finds the origin of these Jewish objections in the information they got from Micah 5:2, which predicts that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (cf. also Aquinas 1997:273–274). They see Jesus as the son of Joseph and Mary from Nazareth (1:46; 6:42; 7:52). Even the brothers of Jesus were sceptical about his claims (7:4–5). Some opponents thought Jesus had lost his mind (cf. 8:48; 10:20). Notwithstanding, the popularity of Jesus increased after the Lazarus episode, which, in turn, brought the sensitive political dimension in focus (11:47; cf. also 8:37,40; 18:31) and heightened the tension between Jesus and the Jewish leaders.

Eventually, Jesus dies a political death on the cross, reserved for serious offences and offenders (19:16). If the Jews were to be asked why Jesus was crucified, they would have answered that Jesus committed blasphemy and threatened the orderly religious life of the day, thereby further threatening to disrupt their religious and political safety (Van der Watt 2000a: *ad loc*).

This is the lie that is seen through unbelieving human eyes. According to the author, the actions of the Jews only surmounted to illustrating that they are indeed children of the devil, a murderer (8:37, 44—ὁμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστέ; See Ridderbos 1997:315; Schnackenburg 1990:2.213). Köstenberger (2004:266) correctly states that: “It was commonly recognized in Second Temple literature that death was the result of Satan's initiative (*Wis* 2:23–24; *Sir* 25:24).”

From the ideological perspective of the implicit author, God inhibits the autonomy of the Jews and Romans (Maier 1986:291). The opponents are presented as powerless instruments in the hands of God who have no control over his eschatological plan (cf. 18:4–9; 19:11). According to Schnelle (1998:279), relative borders are drawn for the opponents to inhibit and direct their conduct according to God's plan.

- 21 When viewed with spiritual eyes, the cross receives an entirely new meaning. Spiritual eyes don't see the cross in John as σκάνδαλον, but δόξα or glorification. It has been argued

In John 3:6 Jesus teaches Nicodemus that whoever/whatever is born from the flesh will produce results according to the flesh and that which is born from the spirit will produce spiritual results (3:6; cf. also 3:31; 8:23; 17:14). Resultantly, Gnlika (1983:27) is correct when he notes: "Die Antithese Fleisch/Geist zeigt zwei voneinander getrennte Seinsweisen an, die je ihren eigenen Ursprung und ihr eigenes Ziel haben." This naturally implies that if one only thinks in terms of human limitations (flesh), you will not be able to see the spiritual significance of any Christ-event (Van der Watt 2000a: *ad loc*; Brown 1984:138; Ridderbos 1997:124–125). John, however, opens another perspective, i.e. to look at the world and in this case, to the cross and the resurrection through faith (Carson 1991:188; Wilckens 1998:67).²² Only through faith will one be able to interpret the Christ-event within the realm of the spiritual reality and the Universal Narrative of God.²³

Brown (1984:138) indicates that "[T]he tactic of the Johannine discourse is always for the answer to transpose to a higher level; the questioner is on the level of the sensible, but he must be raised to the level of the spiritual." To attain this goal, John repeatedly creates the opportunity for Jesus to explain what the nature of the true spiritual reality is. This is done by applying the technique of confronting Jesus with typical misunderstandings in this regard, which are then corrected by Jesus.

8.1.1 *Jesus' Own Reflection on His Death in John*

Within the narratological framework of John, Jesus reflects a number of times on his own death (See, for example, Jn 3:14–15; 8:28–29; 10:17–18; 12:23–26, 31–33;

earlier that the cross as sign can only bear the meaning of glorification in light of the resurrection. In order to strengthen this argument, it is necessary to determine whether the text itself theologically combines the cross and resurrection (and ascension) as an inseparable unity. The cross has been interpreted variously in the past. For example, Bultmann (1984:387) and Käsemann (1968:10) interpreted the cross within the realm of the Son's (com-)mission. After successfully completing his mission, the cross functioned as the way in which he returned to his Father. For the current purpose, it is therefore extremely important to embark on a thorough going study of the text itself and to contemplate Jesus' own reflection on the cross.

- 22 Wilckens (1998:67) illustrates that this "*dualistischer Sprache*" is expressed in obvious categories: "Der Geist *ist* 'von oben', er hat seinen Herkunftsbereich im Himmel (vgl. V.12); und wo er in einem irdischen Menschen wirkt, wird dieser durch seine Kraft in seinem ganzen Sein so in die 'obere' Herkunft des Geistes hineingenommen, dass er völlig verändert, neu geworden, eben 'von oben her geboren' ist."
- 23 Dodd (1960:373) refers to "the inner, theological, necessity for the death of Christ which is balanced by passages which indicate the movement of external, historical, forces which ultimately brought about his crucifixion."

14:30–31; 16:31–33). In this way, the implicit reader receives clear ideological perspectives to eventually interpret the death and resurrection of Jesus meaningfully within a certain framework (cf. the term *σημεῖον* already in 2:18–22 and its connection to the death and resurrection of Jesus). When taking a closer view, it seems however, that in the context of 2:19–22 there are explicit associative relations between the terms *σημεῖον* (2:18), *ἐγείρω*²⁴ (2:19; see also 2:22; 5:8, 21; 12:1, 9, 17; 21:14) and *ἡγέρθη ἐκ νεκρῶν* (2:22)—words that John places both in the mouth of Jesus and in the post-resurrection interpretation and interpretive framework of the disciples, where the resurrection is directly described as a *σημεῖον* (cf. Köstenberger; Morris 1995:179):

*The challenge: Pharisees ask for a *σημεῖον*²⁵

18 Ἀπεκρίθησαν οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ·
τί σημεῖον δεικνύεις ἡμῖν ὅτι ταῦτα ποιεῖς;

*Jesus answers: Destruction²⁶ (λύσατε) and Restoration (ἐγερῶ) of his body (temple) as sign

19 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς·
λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν.

24 Swanson (1997: *ad loc*) notes the semantic use of the term in different New Testament contexts. It is clear from this that the associative meaning of the word is often related to restoration: “ἐγείρομαι (*egeiromai*), ἐγείρω (*egeirō*): vb.; Ξ Str 1453; TDNT 2.333—1. LN 17.10 cause to stand up, rise, arise (Mk 5:41); 2. LN 17.9 stand up (Mt 12:11); 3. LN 23.77 cause to wake up (Ac 12:7); 4. LN 13.83 cause to exist, raise up a child (Lk 3:8); 5. LN 23.94 raise to life (Mt 28:6; Mk 16:14 v.r.); 6. LN 13.65 restore, raise up what is torn down (Jn 2:19); 7. LN 23.140 heal, raise up the sick (Jas 5:15); 8. LN 17.9 (dep.) stand up, get up (Jn 13:4); 9. LN 23.74 (dep.) wake up (Ro 13:11); 10. LN 55.2 (dep.) make war against (Mk 13:8)” (Swanson 1997: *ad loc*). The term *ἐγείρω* (cf. Jn 2:19, 20; 22; 5:8, 21; 7:52; 11:29; 12:1, 9, 17; 13:4; 14:31; 21:14) is, according to me, clearly a technical term used specifically by John to describe resurrection from the dead, and in the case of the lame man is used in the context of the words of Jesus, which creates life and brings restoration to a man who had been suffering with brokenness for years. The same term is also used in 12:1, 9 and 17 to describe the resurrection of Lazarus, and in 5:21 to refer to Jesus as being the one who will lead people from death to life.

25 Morris (1995:173–174) mentions the Jewish expectation that the Messiah would perform certain signs (cf. Joh 7:31; See Barrett 1978:199; Moloney 1998:81).

26 See Morris (1995:174). Cf. Ac 6:14; 7:48; 17:24 with special reference to Acts 6:14 -ἀκηκόαμεν γὰρ αὐτοῦ λέγοντος ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος οὗτος καταλύσει τὸν τόπον τοῦτον καὶ ἀλλάξει τὰ ἔθνη ἃ παρέδωκεν ἡμῖν Μωϋσῆς.

*Misunderstanding: The Jews interpret the words of Jesus explicitly and literally (i.e. fleshly) (cf. 3:3–6)²⁷

²⁰εἶπαν οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι· τεσσαράκοντα καὶ ἕξ ἔτεσιν οἰκοδομήθη ὁ ναὸς οὗτος, καὶ σὺ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερεῖς αὐτόν;

*Correction/Revelation: The Temple refers to the body of Jesus

²¹ἐκεῖνος δὲ ἔλεγεν περὶ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ.

*Reorientation: Correct spiritual interpretation of the words of Jesus

²²ὅτε οὖν ἠγέρθη ἐκ νεκρῶν,
ἐμνήσθησαν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ὅτι τοῦτο ἔλεγεν,
καὶ ἐπίστευσαν τῇ γραφῇ καὶ τῷ λόγῳ ὃν εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς.

The term ἐγείρω (cf. Joh 2:19, 20; 22; 5:8, 21; 7:52; 11:29; 12:1, 9, 17; 13:4; 14:31; 21:14) is used by John in his Gospel to describe resurrection from the ‘dead’ and restoration from brokenness (cf. 2:19–22; 5:21; 12:1, 9, 17; 21:14). The term is used in the story about the healing of the lame man; in the context where the words of Jesus created life and brought restoration to a man who had been sick for thirty-eight years; and also in 5:21 (ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ἐγείρει τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ ζωοποιεῖ, οὕτως καὶ ὁ υἱὸς οὓς θέλει ζωοποιεῖ.) to refer to Jesus as the one who leads people from death to life (cf. 5:24). The same term is also used in 12:1, 12, 9 and 12:17 in relation to the resurrection of Lazarus. In the context of 2:18–22, which was expounded on above, the Jewish leaders asked Jesus for a σημεῖον, and John clearly indicates that this specific σημεῖον will eventually entail “ἠγέρθη ἐκ νεκρῶν” (2:22)—the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Wengst (2000:112–113) correctly notes that this passage (2:18–22) should on the one hand, be read against the background of the preceding cleansing of the Temple and the challenge of the Jews that Jesus should prove his authority with a miraculous sign (See Barrett 1978:199; Moloney 1998:81); and, on the other hand, the next passage where he demarcates 2:23–3:3:21 under the title: “Die Geburt aus dem Geist” (Wengst 2000:112–113). The fact that the Jews were not reborn believers in Jesus, caused them to view Jesus from an unbeliever’s point of view, consequently failing to understand the spiritual meaning of the words of Jesus and its subsequent implications (See Carson 1991:181; Ridderbos

²⁷ See Wengst (2000:112–113).

1997:117; Schnelle 1998:69).²⁸ John however, explains that the words of Jesus should be interpreted figuratively and that the destruction and restoration of the Temple refers, in reality, to his body (2:21—σώματος αὐτοῦ). The only other instance where we encounter the term σώμα in John, it refers to the broken (dead) body of Jesus (cf. 19:38, 39; 20:12; See Schnackenburg 1990:1.357; Barrett 1978:201).

In 8:28–29,²⁹ Jesus uses the symbolic³⁰ term ὑψόω³¹ (cf. the active ὑψώσητε in 8:28 versus the passive ὑψωθήναι in 3:14) to refer to the cross (Busse 2002:166–167; Bultmann 1971:350; See Wilckens 1998:145; Schnelle 1998:157).³² The ὑψόω will also reveal his true divine³³ identity (ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή·) (Schnackenburg 1980:2.202; Schnelle 1998:157),³⁴ (τότε γυνώσκεισθε ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι) as well as his unity with the Father, who doesn't forsake him (οὐκ ἀφήκεν με μόνον) in or at the time of crisis. Schnelle (1998:157) affirms this and further notes: "Durch seinen Tod am Kreuz bestätigt und vollzieht Jesus in vollkommener

28 Schnelle (1998:96) indicates that: "Die Tradition betont, es liege nicht in der Verfüngungsgewalt des Menschen, das Gottesreich zu sehen. Gott selbst schafft dafür die Grundlage."

29 This passage appears, according to Van der Watt (2000a), within the basic framework of a forensic context. It follows upon the words of Nicodemus (7:50–52), and is indicated by the use of terms such as κρίσις 'judge' (7:51; 8:15,16,26,50) and ἡ μαρτυρία 'witness' (8:13,14,17,18). This passage also ensues against the background of the question concerning the identity of Jesus (8:25) and the reaction of the Jews who wanted to stone Jesus (8:59).

30 Barrett (1978:214,343) refers to the double meaning of this verb. It is indeed interesting to note that Numbers 21:8–9, where Moses had to elevate the snake on a pole, also transpires within the context of life, salvation and healing. Barrett (1978:214) notes: "His lifting up will result not only in glory for himself but also in healing for mankind."

31 No less than three times, Jesus refers to the elevation of the Son (See 3:14; 8:28; 12:32, 34).

32 Schnackenburg (1971:256) enquires about the interpretation of ὑψώσητε within its immediate context: "Wie Soll man diese Ankündigung Jesu verstehen, unter dem Unheilsaspekt: dann ist es zu spät, oder unter dem Heilsaspekt: dan wird ihnen jene Erkenntnis geschenkt werden? Oder bleibt das offen, so dass sie die Erkenntnis zum Unheil oder Heil gebrauchen können? Zunächst ist die active Fassung des 'Erhöehens' zu beachten; and den anderen Stellen (3, 14; 12, 32, 34) steht das Verbum im Passiv, und dahinter wird Gottes Verfügung (δεῖ) sichtbar. Hier dagegen werden die ungäubigen Juden dafür verantwortlicher gemacht . . ." As far as I'm concerned, it still doesn't eliminate the Godly δεῖ, on the contrary—it is all part of the Father's plan (cf. Jn 3:16; 14:31; 16:32).

33 See Brown (1972:348).

34 Schnelle (1998:157) notes: "Erst wenn Jesus durch seine Kontrahenten am Kreuz erhöht wird, werden auch sie seine Person erkennen." See Carson (1991:345). See also Neyrey (1996:113–137, 119–120) with regard to honour and shame in the Johannine passion narrative.

Weise den Gehorsam gegenüber dem Vater. Gerade in dieser Stunde weiss sich Jesus mit dem Vater verbunden, der ihn nicht allein lässt. So wie Jesus allezeit den Willen des Vaters tat, vollbringt er ihn auch in seinem Leiden und Sterben." The Father is thus actively present with Jesus at and throughout the events surrounding the cross and doesn't 'forsake' the Son as in the Synoptic versions (cf. Mk 14:50; 15:34). Schnackenburg (1971:187) is therefore correct when he states:

Das Motiv der Verlassenheit Jesu gehört zum Leidensweg des Menschensohnes im Mk-Ev, wo alle Jünger fliehen (14, 50), und es steigert sich dort bis zur Gottverlassenheit am Kreuz (15, 34). Das erste nimmt die joh. Schule auf, das zweite kann sie aus ihrer Christologie nicht zugeben. Der joh. Jesus ist nicht allein, der Vater verlässt ihn nicht, sondern ist stets mit ihm, auch in der dunkelsten Stunde.

SCHNACKENBURG 1971.3:187

The death of Jesus is, according to Lincoln (2005:269), a far cry from humiliation and rejection if seen from God's and Jesus' perspective and should rather be viewed as "conformation that the Father *has not left me alone*." Even if the disciples are left alone momentarily (cf. 16:32),³⁵ the Father stays with the Son (ὁ πατήρ μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐστίν) in the midst of the events surrounding the cross³⁶ (Van der Watt 2000a: *ad loc*).³⁷ As such, the cross, more than anything else,

35 The Gospel itself indicates that the disciples only understood the relevance of everything after the events that accompanied the cross and, specifically, only after the resurrection (Jn 2:22; 12:16; 20:9). Lincoln (2005:141) affirms this argument when he states: "The narrator further explains that the first followers of Jesus came to this insight when they remembered his saying after the resurrection."

36 Gnllka (1983:113) notes that "Jesus gemeinschaft is Gottesgemeinschaft, in Jesus wirkt und redet Gott, Umgang mit Jesus ist Gottesschau! Er ist mit dem Vater völlig geeint, wie die Immanenzformeln (ich in ihm—er in mir) sagen." The *Immanenz* between the Father and the Son is expressed, according to Van der Watt (2000a: *ad loc*), in various ways: "The Father and the Son are one (ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἓν ἐσμεν—10:30; 17:21–23); *the Father is in the Son (ἐν ἐμοὶ ὁ πατήρ—10:38); *and the Son is in the Father (ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ μου—14:20)". See Scholtissek (2000) regarding the *Immanenz* sayings in the Johannine texts.

37 The coming of Jesus is understood within the context of the mission motif. He represents the Father as his agent and therefore completely obeys the Father (10:37–38; 12:49–50). As representative agent of the Father, Jesus may present and introduce himself as one with the Father (Jn 10:30; 17:21–23). Whoever sees Jesus, sees the Father (14:9) and whoever knows Jesus, knows the Father by implication (14:7). Those who honour Jesus, also honour the Father by implication (5:23). This is why Jesus can claim with conviction that he is in the Father and that the Father is in him (10:38; 14:20). According to Kysar (1986:223–224),

becomes the focal point for providing proof that the Father is intensely involved with the Son, who was sent by him (cf. 16:27vv.; 17:7, 25; See also 14:18–21).

Moreover, John also sees the cross-event as the moment judgment is effected over this world and the ruler of this world is thrown out (12:31–33; See Köstenberger 2004:382) and the children of God are drawn to him³⁸ (Lincoln 2005:352; Schnelle 1998:204–205; Kysar 1986:199). The initiative firstly comes from the Father, who sent the Son (3:16—οὕτως γὰρ ἡγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ' ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον. See Morris 1995:203; Carson 1991:205) and is carried out in close partnership between the Father and the Son (See Witherington 1995:175; Jn 8:16, 28–29 μόνος οὐκ εἰμι; See Bultmann 1971:350).³⁹

8.1.2 *Jesus, the Essential Embodiment of Resurrection and Life*

The cross is the culminating situation in which the contrast between life and death receives intense and prime attention (Van der Watt 2000a: *ad loc*). Seen within the dualistic perspective of the Gospel, God is portrayed as the God of life (ὁ ζῶν πατὴρ cf. 6:57) and the devil as the father and origin of the lie (8:44), who is known for murder and destruction (10:10—κλέψη καὶ θύσῃ καὶ ἀπολέσῃ·). God is, in other words, the only source of life (5:26—ὁ πατὴρ ἔχει ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ).⁴⁰ Those who possess life could therefore *ipso facto* only have received it from the Father (6:51–58; 5:19–21). Similarly, Jesus possesses life inherently, which he received from the living Father himself (6:57; 5:26) together with the mission and the ability to distribute it, according to Moloney (1998:222). Brown already noticed in 1971 that the relationship between the Father and the Son can be compared to ancient examples of ‘internship’, “where it is insisted

the current context betrays the presence of revelation terms, which culminates in exclusivity regarding intimate knowledge of God. The revelation can only be found in Jesus (14:6) and as a result he is the way, the truth and the life. Lincoln (2005:390–391) illustrates that the concept ‘way’ was formerly connected with the Torah and that the Law was portrayed as “the way” (cf. Ps 86:11; 119:30). In this context, Jesus’ pronouncement stands in direct opposition to traditional Jewish conceptions.

38 Kysar (1986:199) notes: “Draw translates *helko*, the same word used in 6:44 (cf. above), and in both cases it refers to the divine power which attracts human faith.”

39 See also Jn 8:15 and 5:22,27. Lincoln (2005:266) notes that Jesus repeatedly draws on his intimate relationship with the Father in contexts where his transgression of Jewish conventions come into play and justifies these transgressions by referring to “his participation in the greater cosmic trial and by his unique relationship with the Father.”

40 According to Gnllka (1989:130), the Father is the absolute source of life and doesn’t get life from some or other external source. The Father possesses life inherently, something now applied to the Son as well (6:57; 5:26).

that the apprentice must do what the master does, and whatever the master does, the apprentice does likewise" (1971:218). Jesus links his life-giving abilities, according to Wengst (2000:197–198), to the Father when he notices that he, like his Father, is able to resurrect the dead, give life (5:21) and judge—functions which, according to Jewish belief, belong exclusively to God. Lincoln (2005:203) emphasises the fact that those who believe in the life-giving power of Jesus had already moved from a deadly to a living state of existence (5:24).⁴¹

In the foregoing exegetical study of Lazarus, this Johannine truth is illustrated concretely when Jesus restores Lazarus' body, even after it has already transitioned to another state of being (i.e., decaying) (11:43–44).⁴² *In this context then, Jesus had already shown that he had the ability to restore life that was actually already lost, impossible to turn around, something only God as Creator, should be able to do.* However, a new dimension is introduced with the death and resurrection of Jesus, i.e. that Jesus is not only able to give life, but he is also the source of life and possibilities for qualitative life within the family of God (11:25). According to Brown (1971:430), the themes of light and life are introduced in the prologue (1:4) in the context of creation terminology: "Just as the Word gave life and light to men in creation, so Jesus the incarnate Word gives light and life to men in his ministry of signs of the eternal life that he gives through enlightenment gained from his teaching . . ."

In the Gospel, the resurrection of Lazarus is seen as σημεῖον or sign (12:18) that points (forward) to the fact that Jesus has power over life and death and that he is indeed the sent Son of the One living God (11:42), and that he, like his Father, has the ability to give life (5:20–21). Yet, it is obvious from the context of 11:1–43 that the Son does not act independently from the Father, since he talks

41 Schnelle (1998:107) argues: "Im Hören des Wortes und im Glauben an den von Gott gesandten Sohn vollzieht sich der Schritt vom Tod zum Leben, ist das Heilsgut des ewigen Lebens bereits gegenwärtig. Der Glaube kommt deshalb nicht in das Gericht, den er hat schon längst teil an der in Jesus Christus erschienenen Lebensmacht Gottes. Glaube und Heil fallen ebenso zusammen wie Unglauben und Gericht."

42 Brown (1971:427) indicates that Jesus, in this context, calls Lazarus from the grave with a loud voice (ἐκπαύλασεν). This verb appears only eight times in the New Testament, with six of those instances restricted to the Gospel of John. Brown shows that the verb appears four times in chapters 18–19 and refers each time to the Jews calling for the crucifixion and death of Jesus. This represents an interesting contrast for Brown: The cry of the Jews creates death, while Jesus' cry creates life. Moloney (1998:329) notes that those who know the voice of the shepherd (10:3) will know that the voice and guidance of the shepherd leads to life in abundance against the destruction and death of the devil (cf. 10:10).

to the Father (11:41–42).⁴³ The Father is therefore actively involved with the Son in raising Lazarus (Van der Watt 2000a: *ad loc*). Here, Jesus gives Lazarus life, a function traditionally reserved for God as the only source of life (5:20–21).⁴⁴ Kysar (1986:80) argues that Jesus duplicates God in his life-giving activities: “The Son’s actions are imitations of the Father’s actions.”

According to Van der Watt (2000a: *ad loc*), the Lazarus-event presents Jesus with an opportunity to put into perspective his own position as it relates to life and death within the larger theological framework that eventually places his own death in a particular context/relief. In 11:25–26, Jesus then declares his own position and explains that he is the resurrection and life. Dietzfelbinger (2001:345) is of the opinion that “Auferstehung und ewiges Leben werden also an die Person Jesus gebunden, von ihr ausgelöst und gefüllt.” Jesus says here that believers who stand in a relationship with him will live forever (ζήσεται).⁴⁵ Human death is thus relativised in the light of the eschatological life offered by Jesus (Van der Watt 2000a: *ad loc*). In 11:26 Jesus makes the statement that those who are now living and are believing will never die, but will continue living even if they physically die (Gnilka 1983:91). Consequently Moloney (1998:328) is correct when he remarks that: “Jesus is resurrection and life, and thus the believer on this side of death lives in the spirit (cf. 3:6; 5:24–25), and the one who believes in him now will live on the other side of physical death (cf. 5:28–29; 6:40, 45).”

If Jesus is able to give these things to believers, it means that the same should also be true of himself. With this, the implicit reader is already prepared to meaningfully interpret Jesus’ own death and resurrection. Just as believers will continue living even if they should die, Jesus will also continue living even if he should die.

At this stage of the argument an important question arises: Is the resurrection of Jesus in any way necessary if the reader already knows that earthly death is surpassed by eternal life? It becomes a question, therefore, why Jesus, after having raised Lazarus from the dead, has to physically resurrect himself also. Would it not have been enough for humanity to have had the σημεῖον

43 Beasley-Murray (1999:194) argues that the prayer of Jesus to the Father displays noteworthy agreement with Psalm 118:21: “I thank thee that thou hast answered me” and that the second part of the prayer illustrates something of “a perpetual union with the Father, on the basis of which his continuing prayers are ever heard and therefore granted.”

44 See Brown (1971:218–219).

45 In John Ζάω is always associated with eternal life, and by implication with life within the context of faith and relationship between the believer and God’s family (Van derWatt 2000b).

of Lazarus as proof that Jesus was indeed talking the truth when he claimed power over life and death? Why was it necessary for Jesus to also be resurrected from the dead if his earthly death didn't influence the potentiality of eternal life?

According to Van der Watt (2000a: *ad loc*), the raising of Lazarus was just a σημεῖον with the limited potential of eventually pointing to the larger reality which was to eventualise later, i.e. the resurrection. When Lazarus is raised from the dead it serves as preview to prepare the implicit reader for the culminating sign of the Gospel, namely the resurrection. To put it another way—with the Lazarus-event Jesus simply illustrates *that* he has the ability to give life. The burning question in the Gospel, however, is whether he himself has power over life and death, something he claims to have in 11:25–26, explained from his own position of death and loss of life potentialities. In other words, the question is whether Jesus will have the ability to give/restore life when he loses his own life and his own body is left in total, irreversible brokenness?⁴⁶ Jesus' ability to give life is tested to the extreme when he finds himself on the cross, which leaves the reader in narratological tension (Van der Watt 2000a: *ad loc*).⁴⁷

8.1.3 *Jesus Lays Down His Life with the Purpose of Taking it Up*

In John 10:17–18, in the context where Jesus is compared to a Good Shepherd,⁴⁸ we come across an extremely important theological view of the inseparable bond between cross and resurrection in the context of the Johannine text itself. In this passage Jesus explains that the Father loves him since he is willing to lay down his life (Maier 1984:455), only to take it up again (Moloney 1998:305). As such, the Johannine text itself illustrates that the “Tod und Auferstehung Jesu unlöslich zusammengehören” (Schnackenburg 1971:379) and that “Beide

46 In Jn 11:26–26, the implicit reader is left in narratological tension. Van der Watt (2000a: *ad loc*) notices: “Jesus has illustrated that He can indeed give life, but does He have the power to life in and through death Himself, as He claims in 11:25–26? Can He prove that He is who He claims to be?”

47 Van der Watt (2000a: *ad loc*) notices: “The tension exists in the fact that what Jesus claims regarding the eschatological (eternal) life and what happens to Lazarus, returning to his human life, is not the same, although both has to do with life.”

48 Moloney (1998:301) indicates that there existed within the Jewish tradition a strong Biblical tradition in which shepherds are referenced. Throughout the Old Testament, bad leaders and undesirable leadership are likened to bad shepherds, who tend to deliver their sheep to the mercy of wolves (cf. Jr 23:1–8; Ezk 34; 22:27; Zph 3:3; Zch 10:2–3; 11:4–17). This theme is also prevalent in apocryphal sources in a pre-Christian context (cf. 1 Enoch 89:12–27, 42–22, 59–70, 74–76; 90:22–25). God is also frequently portrayed as a Shepherd that collects the scattered nation (Jr 31:10; 13:17; 23:3; Is 40:11; 49:9–10).

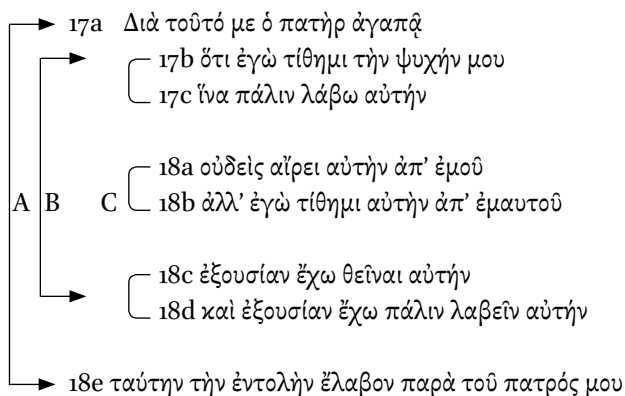
Gedanken sind unlöslich miteinander verbunden und dialektisch aufeinander bezogen” (Wengst 2000:386). Jesus further explains that he is only carrying out his Father’s command (*Gebot*) (ἐντολὴν 10:18) (Schnelle 1998:180; Wengst 2000:386).

The question now becomes whether Jesus (himself) or his Father is responsible for his resurrection? (See Morris 1995:181). Strachan (1995) is of the opinion that “The Resurrection is never regarded in the New Testament as the act of Christ Himself”, but he/she is not correct with this statement. According to John, Jesus is *directly* and *actively* involved in his own resurrection. In regard to this context, Haenchen (1984:49) remarks:

Is the resurrection Jesus’ own deed, so that he restores life to himself? It is probably a case of showing that Jesus’ death was his own free act. But matters cannot be left there. For in that case, it would be the end; Jesus is dead, and death would be victorious. Unless he is to be death’s prize, he has to overcome death by rising from the dead—again through his own free act.

HAENCHEN 1984:49

In an exegetical discussion on this passage, Van der Watt (2000a:110) expounded and interpreted the chiasmic structure of 10:17–18 in the following convincing manner:⁴⁹



(a) According to (C—18a–b) (following van der Watt 2000a:110) it is obvious that no one takes Jesus’ life from him (Maier 1984:455)—“Deshalb vollzieht

49 With this, recognition is given to Van der Watt (2000a:102–143), who is only referenced in the most important of circumstances. In this section I build on what Van der Watt has made me aware of, and here I follow his train of thought.

sich die Selbsthingabe Jesu nicht als passiver Akt, sondern er geht von sich aus und freiwillig den Weg and Kreuz" (Schnelle 1998:180). Jesus is in total control and lays down his own life willingly and is more than willing to drink from the cup (18:11).⁵⁰ However, Kysar (1986:121) highlights the fact that Jesus does this in honour of God, who sent him. When Jesus speaks about his own death (19:9–11), he declares that the true power (ἐξουσία) of his crucifixion is *not to be found in the hands of people* (Wengst 2000:385; Moloney 1998:496), but sprouts from the *power of God* (Beasley-Murray 1999:339). In 10:17–18, the word ἐξουσία is also used to argue that the enemy does not lead Jesus to his death in a fashion similar to the ancient occurrence of a conquering θριαμβος (cf. θριαμβεύσας in Col 2:15 in relation to John's δόξα) (See Gnilk 1983:84). On the contrary! Jesus is in control and does this voluntarily as part of his unique missional command (Kysar 1986:121). The death of Jesus, therefore, does not occur outside of his control, but within his control in the context of God's plan (Haenchen 1984:49).

(b) The chiasmic pattern B (17b–c en 18c–d) accentuates the laying down (τίθημι) and the taking up (λαμβάνω) of life (Van der Watt [2000a:110]). According to the chiasm (B—17b–c) Jesus lays down his life *with the purpose* (ἵνα) of *taking it up again* (πάλιν). The ἵνα πάλιν construction indicates that *the death of Jesus had the purpose of eventually resulting in the resurrection*. For the purpose and flow of the current argument, the latter is a central textual proof that the author of John not only inseparably bound death and resurrection together (Schnackenburg 1971:379), *but that the eventual goal of the crucifixion was aimed at culminating in the resurrection. The focus or outcome of the cross was therefore meant* (ἵνα πάλιν construction) *to result in the resurrection*. Therefore, Morris (1995:456) is correct when he notes: "Christ dies in order that he may rise again. The death is not defeat but victory. It is inseparable from the resurrection."⁵¹

In the second part of the chiasm (B—18c–d), the loaded term ἐξουσία (might or power) is introduced (Van der Watt 2000a:110–111). According to this,

50 Jesus' regal display of power is an important theme in the Johannine passion narrative, with specific reference to John 18–20. However, this motive will not be deployed in detail, since the current purpose is only to point out that Jesus had total control over his own arrest, humiliation and death (18:4–5, 7–8) and to show that the resurrection is inseparably bound up with the cross and depicts a regal power display (18:36–37). John's presentation of the passion narrative naturally differs from that of the other Gospels in that Jesus is portrayed as being in total control and, in that, the cross is not seen as a σκάνδαλον, but as part of the δόξα of Jesus.

51 Beasley-Murray (1998: *ad loc*) is correct in stating that "[T]he Evangelist views the death and resurrection of Christ as indissolubly one. The redemptive event is the crucifixion-resurrection of the Son."

Jesus possesses the power, authority, right and ability to do this.⁵² Concerning the issues of life and death, Jesus may act with authority (Wengst 2000:386). The abilities of Jesus are not limited by the inhibiting reality of death (cf. Kysar 1986:298).⁵³ As a result, Jesus is actively involved in his own resurrection (Haenchen 1984:49). The fact that he is able to function while being physically dead proves that he is the essential embodiment of life (1:4) in abundance (10:10) and that he is indeed ‘resurrection’ and ‘life’ (11:25), because God handed over life-creating power to the Son (5:26) (cf. Maier 1984:221).⁵⁴ Even when Jesus physically dies, he still inherently possesses qualitative, divine life

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- 52 According to Van der Watt (2000a:110–111) it is important to fully understand the semantic meaning of ἐξουσία in this context. Lexicographically speaking, it is particularly utilised as representative of the following meanings: 1. *power or authority or ability, capability, might, power to do a thing*. 2. *The freedom of choice, right to act or decide*. 3. *Absolute power, authority, might, warrant as opposed to right, with the derivatives like an office, magistracy, government, ruling or official powers or authorities*. See Bauer, Gingrich, and Danker (1979: *ad loc*), as well as Liddell & Scott (1992: *ad loc*). ἐξουσία appears in the following contexts in the Gospel of John: 1:12; 5:27; 10:18; 17:2; 19:10–11. According to Van der Watt (2000a:111), it is in each of these contexts associatively connected to themes concerning the power of God over life and death, salvation and judgment. Van der Watt (2000a:111) explains: “In 1:12 the capability, power or authority to be children of God is given to believers. In 5:27 Jesus receives the power or authority to judge. Jesus also received the power or might from the Father over flesh (17:2) in order to give them life. In 19:10–11 Jesus discusses the power or capability of Pilate to crucify him. This is an authority given only by God. In the Gospel the predominant use of ἐξουσία is: that somebody is in a position of power and authority and is therefore able and capable of something, because he or she has the right to do it.”
- 53 Kysar (1986:298) views the resurrection as part of God’s plan for salvation (3:14; 12:34), which brought life to the world. According to Van der Watt (2000a:111 footnote 374), this theological motive has to be understood in light of the Old Testament concept of God being the God of life. Wherever life is found, there God is also present and involved. Death implies the loss and absence of life, which is why death is associated with a certain sphere where God is absent. When Jesus ends up entering this realm, he proves that he is indeed life and that he has authority over death. Human (2007:16) agrees with this and notes: “‘Dood’ was nie net ’n lewelope liggaam nie. Dit was eweneens die afwesigheid van lewe of God. Siekte, bedreiging van vyande of die gevolge van verkeerde dade was doodsbewenisse (Ps 44:23; 88). Om weg van Jerusalem of die tempel te wees, was ervaring van die dood (Ps 137); daarom was Israel se terugkeer uit ballingskap herlewung uit die dood (Eseg 37).”
- 54 Maier (1984:221) states that “Jesus ist nicht unser ‘Superstar’”. With this statement he simply wants to argue that Jesus received his power solely from God, who handed it over to him.

(1:4; 5:26).⁵⁵ *Therefore, only if the type of life in question is qualitatively superior to the physical, transient life will a physical death have no influence on that kind of life.* In relation to this, Schnelle (1998:34) notices (cf. 1:4): “Im Logos ist das Leben gegenwärtig, er ist der Ort des Lebens . . .”

Thirdly, it should be noted that the chiasm begins and ends with references to the Father (A—17a and 18e) (following Van der Watt [2000a:111]). Even though Jesus acts independently (ἀπ’ ἑαυτοῦ), his Father is still closely involved with these events and it “[R]esultiert aus der Liebe zwischen Vater und Sohn” (Maier 1984:454).⁵⁶ Schnelle (1998:180) also argues that “Die liebe zwischen Vater und Sohn (cf. Joh 3,35; 17:24) und die sich darin bekundende Einheit steht im Zentrum . . .”. Dietzfelbinger (2001:313) is therefore correct in noticing that the love that exists between Father and Son had been there from the beginning and is integral to the mission motif: “Der Liebe Gottes zu Jesus entsteht also nicht erst aufgrund des Gehorsams, mit dem Jesus in die Passion hineingeht. Sie ist mit der Sendung da und ist ihre treibende Ursache.”

The act of Jesus is seen as an ἐντολήν (18e) or command from God and is motivated by love (17a—See also 3:35;⁵⁷ cf. Maier 1984:454). Van der Watt (2000a:111) notices: “Even though Jesus is actively involved in his own resurrection, He still does it with and under the charge of his Father. If John, therefore, says that Jesus lays down his life and takes it up again, he does this on the basis of his intimate relationship to the Father.”⁵⁸

55 Kysar (1986:30) notices that the Word in 1:4 is defined as a divine agent of creation who continues to build on God’s creative re-creation to the extent that all existence becomes dependant on the Word’s ability to recreate. The Word is thus the source of life. For Kysar, the connection between life and light refers to those who stand in a relationship with the Father. John 1:5 draws a picture of dualism prevalent in the Gospel, according to which the Word is in conflict with darkness. For Kysar, darkness represents the distortion of creation, the chaos of faithlessness and estrangement from God. Within the context of this cosmic conflict, darkness was unable to overpower (κατέλαβεν) the Word, who represents life and light. Light shines triumphantly over darkness.

56 Theobald (1992:41–87, 55–56), quoted by Van der Watt (2000a:111), argues that Jesus’ ability to lay down his life and take it up again should be interpreted within the context of the mission motif. Jesus was sent to earth and, with that, received the ability to give life.

57 Maier (1984:454) argues: “Gerade das Kreuz Jesu führt ja den Heilsplan des ‘Vaters’ zum Erfolg. Auf diese Weise ist es geradezu der engste Nährungspunkt der Liebe des himmlischen Vaters und der Liebe des Sohnes zum Vater. Man erinnere sich an die Aussage des Täufers in 3, 35.”

58 Dietzfelbinger (2001:1.312) rightly states: “Die Liebe des Vaters zu Jesus ist nicht nur gleichzeitig mit der Sendung Jesu in die Welt getreten; sie ist der wirkende Ursprung dieser Sendung, in der die Liebe Gottes zur Welt (3,16) in die Geschichte hineingetragen wird.” (cf. 15:9).

The Father's involvement with the Son during his resurrection is further illustrated by the use of the word ἐγείρω (following Van der Watt [2000a:111]). In Romans 6:9, Paul employs the passive verb ἐγερθεῖς or ἐγείραντα (cf. Rom 4:24) to involve God as the subject of the process (Van der Watt 2000a:111). In John 2:22, the author also uses the passive verb ἡγέρθη to refer to the resurrection, but in the immediate context (2:19, 20) then utilises the active form of the verb. The passive verb in 2:22 possibly indicates that life and resurrection originates with God as the primary source of life, as it appears in 10:17–18 (Dietzfelbinger 2001:312–313). Yet, Jesus receives power over life and death (5:21) and will *resurrect himself*. Therefore, Van der Watt (2000a:112) is correct when arguing that the Father is intimately involved with the Son during the resurrection, but that the Son still remains the embodiment of life: “Jesus is not just the mediatory agent of life, but he is life himself (11:25).” Wengst (2001.2:26) agrees with this and notices: “Zum anderen kann der Evangelist Jesus, der ebenfalls gestorben ist, doch nur deshalb sagen lassen: ‘Ich bin die Auferstehung und das Leben’, weil von ihm bezeugt worden ist, dass Gott ihm von den Toten auferweckt hat.”

During and through the resurrection *per sé*, it becomes clear that Jesus is the Son of God. The confession of Thomas becomes the hermeneutical key for interpreting the rest of the Gospel (20:24–25, 28) (Van der Watt [2000a:113]). Jesus was dead, but now he lives again, something which illustrates that he truly possesses life intrinsically (Maier 1984.1:21), and something, in turn, which can only be attributed to God as far as Israel is concerned (Wilckens 1998:168).⁵⁹ Specifically for this reason, Thomas has the confidence and certitude to confess that Jesus is God (ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου, ‘My Lord and my God!’—20:28). Van der Watt (2000a:113) summarises it accurately:

This confession of Thomas represents the pivotal point in the Gospel. It formulates the identity of Jesus, the agent of God who died on the cross, but now lives and therefore may be identified as Lord and God. The cross events not only illustrate that the living God, the Lord of life, is with Jesus, but that Jesus himself is involved in his own resurrection and should therefore be confessed as Lord and God himself.

VAN DER WATT 2000A:113

In 3:14–15, the cross, as divine imperative (δεῖ), is compared to Moses' elevation of the snake in the desert (Nm 21:4–9). Kysar (1986:54–55) is correct in saying

59 Wilckens (1998:168) correctly notices: “Wie der Vater die Vollmacht der Totenaufweckung innehat (vgl. Weish 16,3), hat sie auch der Sohn (5,21), nicht nur zue Auferweckung der Seinen, sondern auch zu zainer eigenen Auferstehung.”

that the $\delta\epsilon\iota$ —construction presupposes the determination of the divine plan. The revelatory aspect of the elevation receives emphasis. The cross reveals Jesus' true identity. In this sense, eternal life is not earned on the cross, but is something Jesus received from the Father as part of his mission to hand out freely (Van der Watt 2000a:114–115; Dietzfelbinger 2001:313).

Just like Israel looked up at the copper snake in the desert so many years ago (Nm 21:9), and received healing (Beasley Murray 1999:50), and was saved from brokenness and continued living, those who believe in the elevated Christ will also live and experience eternal healing and restoration (salvation) (Gnilka 1984:28; Moloney 1998:101;⁶⁰ Brown 1971:133⁶¹).⁶²

EXCURSUS: *Jesus gives life like God gives life*

In the Gospel, and in the theology of Israel, God is described as the Living One ($\delta\ \zeta\omega\nu\ \pi\alpha\tau\acute{\eta}\rho$),⁶³ the origin of true, eternal life (6:57). Salvation, or life in Johannine terms, originates from God and God alone (cf. Wengst 2000:254).⁶⁴ In other words, those who have and are able to share this *gift of eschatological life* (6:51–58) could only have gotten it from God (Van der Watt 2000a: *ad loc*).⁶⁵ Maier (1984:1.291) rightly indicates that: “Zuerst macht er eine ‘Lebens’-Kette oder ‘Lebens’—Verbindung sichtbar, die vom ‘Vater’ zum ‘Sohn’ und dann zum Gläubigen (‘*der, der mich isst*’)

60 Moloney (1998:101) rightly notices: “As the Israelites gazed upon the elevated serpent to be returned to health, so also the one who believes in the revelation of God (v. 13) that takes place on the cross (v. 14) will have eternal life (v. 15).”

61 Brown (1971:133) argues that the Jews did not interpret the snake in the desert as a source of healing, but that the snake was simply a sign that pointed to God as Healer: “For he who turned toward it was saved, not by what he saw, but by you, the Saviour of all” (cf. *Midrash Wis* 16:6–7). Brown (1971:133) then notes that in the current context, Jesus becomes the source of life and salvation (12:32) and that those who see Jesus on the cross ultimately see the Father (14:9).

62 Beasley-Murray (1998: *ad loc*) states: “The brief kerygmatic formula of vv. 14–15 makes evident the presuppositions of v. 13. It is closely related to the synoptic predictions of the Passion (Mark 8:31, etc), but illuminates the meaning of the Passion by the incident of Moses lifting up a bronze snake for the healing of Israelites bitten by snakes (Num 21:4–9). To the lifting up of the snake on a pole that all may live corresponds to the lifting up of the Son of Man on a cross that all may have eternal life.”

63 Moloney (1998:225) notes that $\delta\ \zeta\omega\nu\ \pi\alpha\tau\acute{\eta}\rho$ is a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament.

64 Gnilka (1989:130).

65 Wengst (2000:1.254) states: “Der wird hier betont als ‘der lebendige Vater’ bezeichnet, von dem allein her Jesus, dessen Tod in diesem Abschnitt ständig im Blick ist, Leben hat. Und er vermittelt denen Leben, die sich auf den in ihn präsenten Gott einlassen . . .”

verläuft. Er bringt also zum Ausdruck, dass wir durch Jesus Anteil am göttlichen 'Leben' bekommen (vgl. Joh 1,4; 5,26 und 2 Petr 1,4)."

The same is obviously true for healing and restoration, where someone gets back the life he had lost or the life he never had to begin with. Schnelle (1998:134) mentions: "Wie der Sohn durch den Vater lebt, so wird der Glaubende durch Jesus leben (vgl. V. 33-35.48.51a)." Jesus proves that he received his power from God, the life-giver, when he raises Lazarus from the dead. Through the Lazarus-event, Jesus demonstrates that he could, already there and then, give life, even in a context where life had irreversibly run its course, like sand through an hourglass. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. The body of this Lazarus had already decayed into irreversible brokenness (11:39 ἡδὴ ὄζει).⁶⁶ This miracle attracted mixed reactions from bystanders (11:45), with some believing in Jesus after witnessing the miracle and others informing the Jewish leaders what Jesus had done. The interpretive commentary by Jesus in 11:25–26 provides a very important theological view of the nature of the type of life Jesus came to bring. Jesus says that the life he brings is such that it will never perish, even should you lose your physical life by dying.⁶⁷ The nature of the life Jesus brings is not corrupted by physical death. The nature of the divine, eschatological life determines that the believer remains alive after physically dying. Those who live accordingly will be able to raise from an earthly death, precisely because it is eternal life which is superior to earthly life. According to 6:57, this life can only be accessed from God (See Wengst 2000:254; Beasley-Murray 1999:94–96; Maier 1984:1.291). Whoever has this kind of life, could only have gotten it from God, which is a witness of God's involvement with this person (Van der Watt 2000a:116; See also Maier 1984:1.291; Schnelle 1998:134).

In the exegesis of John 11, we argued for the conciliatory raising of Lazarus. Jesus proved there that he is/embodies resurrection and life. We also saw that Jesus had interaction with the Father in that context. *However, with the crucifixion, Jesus himself enters the domain of death as the powerful one (10:17–18).* While Jesus occupies 'death', he still 'lives', because he takes up his own life by resurrecting. He is, after all, the source of the resurrection and life (1:4; 11:24; 12:24, 25, 26). Precisely because he has control over his life in death, the divine presence and sanction can't be denied (Van der Watt 2000a:116).

66 Dodd (1960:379) rightly mentions that these events have a 'provisional reality'.

67 Dodd (1960:371) emphasises that Jesus is seen as 'Conqueror of death and Lord of life' and that, in the present existence, life can never be the same again (439).

Thus, an important theological view on the resurrection of Jesus dominates here, i.e. that God doesn't raise Jesus (as Paul likes to put it—cf. Rom 4:24–25; 6:4 etc.), but that Jesus has the power to raise himself. The passive form of the verb is indeed used to refer to the resurrection of Jesus in 2:22. In 5:21, we see that it is God who raises the dead, but that he handed over these capabilities to Jesus, and, with that, empowered Jesus as life-giver and healer (5:21; 6:57): “Denn wie der Vater die Toten auferweckt und lebendig macht, so macht auch der Sohn lebendig, wen er will. Auch richtet der Vater niemand, sondern er hat das Gericht ganz dem Sohn übertragen . . .” (Gnilka 1983:1.42). The passive verb in 2:22 possibly indicates in the Johannine context that life and resurrection originates with God as the primary source of life, but that God passed on this power over life and death (10:17–18) to Jesus.⁶⁸

Wilckens (1998:168) argues that the Son acts in *Eigen-Vollmacht*, but in close partnership (*Gemeinschaft*) with the Father: “Aber diese Eigen-Vollmacht is nicht (modern) als ‘autonome’ Selbstverwirklichung, sondern aus der wesenhaften Gemeinschaft mit dem Vater zu verstehen.” Thus, Van der Watt (2000a:116) is certainly correct when stating that Jesus doesn't lay down his life and takes it up again as if doing this independently from the Father. Wilckens (1998:168) agrees: “Es ist der Vater, der dem Sohn diese Vollmacht gegeben hat”. The reason Jesus is able to do it in the first place, is his intimate involvement with his Father's cause (3:16) and his Father's intimate involvement with the mission of his Son (5:21; 10:17–18).⁶⁹ When Thomas puts his hand in the side of the resurrected Lord (20:28),⁷⁰ it means that, at that very moment, God's presence is also available to fleshly people within history. Wengst (2001.2:299) affirms this:

68 Wilckens (1998:117) postulates: “In Joh 5,21 ist es Jesus als der Sohn, der über die gleiche Macht, die Toten zum Leben aufzuerwecken, verfügt wie der Vater. Das Leben, das er zu geben vermag, ist das ewige Leben, das der Vater schöpferisch hervorruft und gibt.”

69 Van der Watt (2000a: *ad loc*) states: “God se reddende teenwoordigheid onder sy volk word treffend deur die tradisie van die verhoogde slang geïllustreer (Num 21:9). Net so is dit 'n goddelike imperatief (δεῖ) dat Jesus aan die kruis verhoog moet word ten einde die liefdevolle en reddende teenwoordigheid van God onder sy volk duidelik te maak (3:14–15. Vgl. Hanson 1991:42vv.). Daar, verhoog aan die kruis, sal die identiteit van Jesus as die gehoorsame gestuurde van die Vader, duidelik word (8:28) en sal Hy almal na Hom kan trek (12:32). Uit hierdie ὑψώω gedeeltes blyk dit duidelik dat God se liefdevolle teenwoordigheid aan die kruis in Jesus die heil moontlik maak.”

70 Dodd (1960:443) rightly mentions that the text doesn't overtly state that Thomas put his hand in Jesus' side, but that the text nonetheless implies this.

“Er sieht den Gekreuzigten und erkennt in dessen Lebendigkeit den schöpferisch handelnden Gott.”⁷¹

In this way, the crucifixion and resurrection (cf. 10:17–18) becomes primarily the *revelation territory* for both the relationship between Father and Son and, consequently, the truth of all the revelatory acts of Jesus (Van der Watt 2000a:117; See also Wengst 2001.2:299).⁷² Schnackenburg (1971:2.378) argues:

71 Dietzfelbinger's (1992:17–18) attempts to divert the full emphasis of all events (among others, the empty tomb) to faith alone is not convincing. It doesn't take sufficient cognisance of the large number of sayings indicating that the disciples will only gain complete understanding after the crucifixion. He also overlooks important historical nuances in the Thomas narrative.

72 Van der Watt (2000a:118) sees the cross as the occasion where the Son finishes his mission and returns to the Father. Käsemann (1968) describes the death of Jesus as the point at which Jesus returns to his Father. He was sent by the Father and has to return to 'above' as pre-existential and unique Son of God. In other words the crucifixion is his way back. I agree with Van der Watt (2000a: *ad loc*) that Käsemann is not wrong in this regard. The death of Jesus is indeed described in such a way by John. I have an issue with seeing this as the only purpose and meaning underlying the death of Jesus. From our discussion thus far, it would seem that Johannine thoughts about the death of Jesus are much richer and deeper than simply viewing it as the moment of return to the Father. Within the mission narrative, the death of Jesus is the point at which Jesus parts with his bodily limitations and returns to 'above,' where the Jews can't get to him (8:21). Naturally, the Jews didn't understand this (8:22), blinded by disbelief (cf. 3:3). In 16:27–32, Jesus explains that He 'went forth' from his Father (ἐξῆλθεν) and came into the cosmos (ἐλγλυθα) and that he now leaves again (ἀφίημι) from the cosmos to return (πορεύομαι) to his Father, from where he originally came. The incarnation is thus portrayed as the way in which he came, and the cross and resurrection as the way in which he returns to his Father (Van der Watt 2000a: *ad loc*). It is, then, particularly within the context of the mission that the meaning of the cross is positioned and reinterpreted. Van der Watt (2000a: *ad loc*) argues that the ascension of the Son (ἀναβαίνω) is used in a mission context in 6:62 in that Jesus goes back to where he previously was/came from. In 13:1, Jesus is said to μεταβαίνω from the cosmos to the Father and refers in that context to his coming, suffering and death. Once again, it is clear that the cross represents the place of alternation between his heavenly and earthly positions. In 13:3, it says that Jesus ἐξῆλθεν from God and ὑπάγει to him and that God endows everything to him (cf. 6:62).

In 14:1–3 Jesus tells the disciples that he goes to prepare a place for them in his Father's house. Jesus was sent to earth to complete certain tasks, after which he is supposed to return to his Father. The preparation of a place for believers illustrates the successful completion of the mission command and the planning with which the mission to the world was completed. The fact that Jesus prepares space indicates possibilities for life within

Noch stärker als in der freiwilligen Lebenshingabe offenbart sich die Verfügungsmacht des Sohnes darin, dass er das Leben, 'wieder (an sich) nehmen' kann. Auf diese Vollmacht (ἐξουσία) zur Lebenserlangung konzentriert sich der Nächste Satz. Die Freiheit des Sohnes (cf. 8, 36) ist vom Vater geschenke Vollmacht, und darum kann auch schon die Lebenshingabe als ἐξουσία bezeichnet werden. Die eigentliche Vollmacht des Sohnes aber, die Macht über den Tod, offenbart sich darin, dass er das Leben (ψυχή) in der gleichen Weise wider an sich nehmen kan, wie er es hingeben hat. Beides geschieht in einer einzigen Bewegung aus seiner ἐξουσία. Der gleich gebaute Doppelsatz bringt den Gedanken zur Geltung, dass Tod und Auferstehung Jesu unlöslich zusammengehören und ein einziges Geschehen sind, über das der Sohn verfügt.

SCHNACKENBURG 1971:2.378

8.1.4 Summary

In the discussion of 10:17–18 and 2:18–22 above, it was argued from the text itself that Jesus lays down his own life in order to take it up again. As such, the crucifixion and resurrection were confirmed to be an inseparable theological unit (cf. the study of 10:17–18 above). In what follows, I will try to argue that the crucifixion and resurrection should indeed be interpreted in healing terms: 1) by interpreting the cross as essential reality of brokenness, 2) and viewing the resurrection as the healing or restoration of these lost (and new) possibilities for life, 3) as well as to prove that the resurrection as *semeion* is the culminating healing act in John, which makes 'healing' possible for all humanity.

8.2 Can the Cross-events be Understood in Healing Terms?

Earlier on in this book it was argued that John presents his healing narratives in a unique way. Acts of healing are signs (σημεῖα) that point to the fact that Jesus is the sent Son of God who has the power to give life (20:30–31) and are aimed at evoking faith (cf. Schnelle 1998:312). In order to understand the cross and resurrection in healing terms, we will have to interpret these events *heuristically* within the framework of preceding healing narratives.

God's family. In other words, Jesus gathered a family for himself during his mission (cf. Van der Watt 2000b).

8.2.1 *The Distinction between the 'Curing' of a 'Disease', and the 'Healing' of an 'Illness' and the Restoration of Brokenness*⁷³

In relation to the concepts 'disease', 'illness' and 'brokenness', we maintained, following Pilch (2000), to the adoption of an approach that is more inclusive than the Western Biomedical paradigm of 'disease.' It was shown that the term 'illness' makes room for malaise and indisposition, which negotiates cultural *brokenness* in an ancient context. Closely associated with the term 'illness' is the term *brokenness*, which is opposite to wholeness in a Jewish, Temple-oriented symbolic universe. 'Illness' affects and impairs wholeness and results, to a larger or lesser extent, in brokenness. In this setting or context, healing is seen as the restoration of brokenness—not only on the physical or bio-medical level, but also on the socio-religious level. This semantic framework represents an attempt to get closer to the ancient Mediterranean frame of reference with regard to issues such as 'disease', 'illness' and 'brokenness' or 'death' on the one hand, and 'curing', 'healing', 'restoration', 'recreation' on the opposite end of the continuum. From a Western and post-modern oriented worldview, it is alien and strange to think that when the topics of 'illness' and 'brokenness' or 'healing' and 'restoration' come up, religious healing should be included by definition. The reason is that the understanding of illness and healing within a Western orientation and worldview is the product of a bio-medical paradigm, which includes certain modern, scientific, associative conceptual frameworks, such as we explained in the first chapter (following Pilch 2000). In ancient Mediterranean thought, illness and healing were conceptualised differently, and the terms were often used to describe socio-religious brokenness or restoration. Green and others (1992:81) agree with this and state that:

The Gospels, like elsewhere in biblical literature, frequently use the words blindness, deafness, eye and ear in a figurative sense, conveying more

73 In Johannine healing narratives, we have repeatedly seen how someone's physical brokenness is restored to wholeness: In 4:43–54, the brokenness or illness which threatened the existential possibilities of the nobleman's son are restored to life. In the process, the entire earthly family received possibilities for eternal life within the family of God.

In John 5:1–9, we encounter a man who had been lame for 38 years. Jesus heals this man's physical brokenness and restores his limbs to life.

In John 9:1–41, Jesus heals the man who was born blind and restores not only his physical sight, but also his spiritual eyes.

In John 11:1–44, Jesus restores a dead Lazarus and raises him to life.

In John 4:1–42, the Samaritan woman receives spiritual healing and restoration from her brokenness and sin when Jesus offers her living water and she comes to believe in Jesus; and becomes a child of God (cf. 1:12).

than the activity of the body's sensory organs. God is made known through words and deeds. To see and hear God's revelation fully requires not only physical sensation but spiritual sensitivity. It requires a personal response of understanding and commitment. Therefore, blindness and deafness can describe the inability to comprehend the spiritual truth inherent within material sights or words. This condition of hardness of heart may be due to religious or moral impairment, or due to God's intention. Salvation is frequently associated with sight in Jewish and Christian literature (Ex 14:13; 2 Chr 20:17; Ps 50:23; 91:16; 119:123; Is 40:5; 42:16–17; 59:11; IQS 11:2–3; CD 20:34; T. Gad. 5:7; 2 Clem 1:6–7; 9:2). The formula of the frequently quoted Shema emphasises the equally important role of hearing in revelation: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deut 6:4). It is a call to discern and obey the will of God. In contrast to God who both “sees” and “hears” (Ex 2:24; 3:7, 9; 12:13; Deut 5:28; Is 37:17; Zech 7:11–13), idols are “blind” and “deaf” (Deut 4:28), as are those who worship them (Ps 115:5–6). The OT prophets chastened the Hebrew people for having eyes and ears, and yet not seeing or hearing (Is 6:9–10; 43:8; Jer 5:21; Ezek 12:2). Responsibility for such spiritual blindness and deafness is sometimes said to be borne by God (Deut 29:4; Is 6:9–10) but, on the other hand, can be traced to the person's own obduracy. Yet God can overcome this hardness of heart (Is 29:18; 35:4–5; 42:6–7, 16; 61:1).

GREEN ET AL. 1992:81

The Cross as Reality of Woundedness and Brokenness⁷⁴

In John, Jesus lays down his life as the powerful one and not the defeated one (Haenchen 1984:49; see Wengst 2000:385–386; Moloney 1998:311). The fact that John sees the cross as $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ (12:23; 13:31; 8:28; 12:31) doesn't take away for

74 In the exegetical study of the abovementioned healing narratives, it has continually been argued that the acts of healing in John are signs ($\sigma\eta\mu\epsilon\iota\alpha$) that try and illustrate a certain point, i.e. that Jesus is the source of qualitative (eternal) life and that he offers potentialities for life within the family of God. As such, the $\sigma\eta\mu\epsilon\iota\alpha$ of the healing acts point to the true identity of Jesus, i.e. that he is the sent Son of God, the source of life, and that he came both to save the world from a deadly existence (cf. 3:16; 5:24) and to gather believers into the sphere of God's family (1:12). Put differently, the purpose of the Son's mission is to evoke faith in Jesus, to repair people's broken relationship with God (3:16; 20:30–31) and to provide them with eternal potentialities for life. The recreation of life potentialities within the family of God can also be seen as an act of healing or restoration. According to John, those who believe are the very same ones who have been cured from spiritual blindness (cf. 9:41; 12:40) and are now able to see the kingdom of God (cf. 3:3), and, henceforth, have received the right to be children of God (1:12). In this way, the mission of the Son is

a moment, the reality of Jesus' woundedness, brokenness and death. Beasley-Murray (1999:336) also emphasises the Johannine focus on Jesus' regal display of power, but affirms the reality of his crucifixion and humiliation: "Mockery it certainly was, accompanied by cruel despising and hate . . . [T]hey spat at him and slapped his face . . ." (1999:336). Jesus is delivered (18:28), mercilessly whipped (ἐμαστῖγωσεν—19:1), teased, degraded (19:2) and assaulted (19:3). Jesus is wounded and his body is broken (2:19). He allows them to lead him to his crucifixion, to drive nails through his hands and feet. He allows them to wound his body to the extent that he, like Lazarus, *succumbs to bodily brokenness* (19:33) and is placed in a grave, declared dead without the possibility of life (if seen through the faithlessness of human eyes) (19:38–42). Jesus refers to his own death in John 2:18–22 in terms of "destruction": "λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν" (2:19). Van Houwelingen (1997:87) is correct in noticing: "Het afbreken en herbouwen duidde op het doden én het opwekking van zijn lichaam." Moloney (1998:222), in his commentary on 6:25–59, speaks in a similar fashion and refers to the "revelation of God in the broken body and spilled blood of the Son of man." Jesus himself speaks in terms of destruction (brokenness) (cf. λύσατε) and raising up (restoration) (cf. ἐγερῶ) when he contemplates his own death and resurrection (cf. 2:19). The implicit reader sees the irony,⁷⁵ however, and comprehends that the Jewish reaction to the words of Jesus designates, in this context, ignorance (2:21) and spiritual blindness: "Damit schafft er das erste 'Mißverständniss' als Ausdruck des Unglaubes" (Gnilka 1983:25). The author of John goes further to note

connected to healing, in that faith is the result of conversion and that conversion, in turn, is in John's view the healing of spiritual blindness (See 3:3; 9:41; 12:40).

In the Lazarus story, we encounter the climax of Jesus' healing acts (and σημεῖα) for people. Interestingly, in this context, Lazarus' illness or brokenness ultimately results in his physical death. The body of Lazarus betrays signs of irreversible brokenness in that his physical body had already started decaying (ἤδη ὀζει) (11:39). In the midst of this culminating reality of irreversible death, Jesus restores Lazarus' brokenness and creates new life potentialities by raising him from the dead. Against the flow of expectations and confessions, the miracle of Jesus breaks surprisingly through. Jesus shows that he has the ability to restore life which has gone irrevocably missing. However, as argued above, the healing of Lazarus happens in a conciliatory fashion. But, then, the implicit reader is left with an internal tension: Can Jesus, who was able to restore Lazarus' lost life potentialities, heal or restore his own brokenness when all life and life potentialities (within conventional borders) had come to an end for him?

In what follows, it will be argued that the crucifixion and resurrection should be interpreted in terms of healing: 1) by interpreting the cross as essential reality of brokenness and loss of existential potentialities, 2) and viewing the resurrection as the healing or restoration of these lost (and new) possibilities for life.

75 Gnilka (1983:25) speaks of "Der ironische Imperativ".

that not even the disciples understood the words of Jesus, not until after the *resurrection* (cf. 2:22). The resurrection serves as the stimulus which reveals the truth and allows them to 'see'. *The resurrection was therefore the culminating σημεῖον that led them to this particular conviction.* Already in chapter two, the implicit reader receives clues to interpret the death and resurrection of Jesus within such terms.

Nonetheless, after the death of Jesus, the disciples initially find themselves in a state of disorientation (20:19), not able to see the full picture (cf. Moloney 1998:530). It is obvious that it is expected that the implicit reader should be aware of the fact that the disciples, throughout the narrative, fail to comprehend the totality of the Jesus' message and mission. (2:22; 12:16; 13:7; 20:9). After the death of Jesus, we locate the disciples behind locked doors, fear-stricken (20:19 τὸν φόβον τῶν Ἰουδαίων), unaware of the eschatological healing about to triumphantly supersede all expectations. Kysar (1986:303) describes the disciples as being *paralysed* with fear. Through Thomas' eyes we recognise the signs of faithless human interpretation (20:25 οὐ μὴ πιστεύσω). From Thomas' point of view, the cross is still a σκάνδαλον and not yet located within the sphere of δόξα. Clearly, this is similar to our previous argument that the cross only becomes δόξα in light of the resurrection, which enables the disciples to see the full picture and to believe in the words of Jesus (cf. 2:22).⁷⁶

Ultimately and suddenly, the divine plan shatters all earthly conventions and paradigms. This Jesus, who laid down his life (10:17–18), fulfills the rest of the divinely sanctioned plan by taking up his life again (ἵνα πάλιν λάβω αὐτήν). In the process of taking up his life, his wounds are 'healed'. Jesus, the embodiment of resurrection and life (11:25), *restores his own brokenness* and rises up from death to life (20:1–30). Just as before, when he restored Lazarus from death to life (though in collaboration with God), he now gives this life to *himself* and fulfills the words of 11:25, thereby releasing the internal tension for the implicit reader. As God's agent of transformation, Jesus allows the breakthrough of new life with its accompanying associated potentialities, as part of a miraculous transformation interaction (Moloney 1998:311).⁷⁷

76 Thus, it is only from the perspective of the cross that the totality of Jesus' earthly conduct, as well as the full meaning thereof, clearly comes to the fore. This perspective becomes clear against the background of the inability of the disciples to fully comprehend everything during the life and work of Jesus. (2:22; 12:16; 13:7; 20:9). Only in retrospective light of the resurrection and outpouring of the Spirit (2:22; 20:22) were the disciples able to see the cross as δόξα (cf. 2:22) and "kon die dissipels deur pneumatiese verligting die vervlegting van die profetiese tradisies en die Jesusgebeure na waarde skat" (Van der Watt 2000a: *ad loc*).

77 Moloney (1998:311) is of the opinion that most scholars view the resurrection as an act of God. However, he sees it differently. According to Moloney, the author of the Gospel

John constantly uses the term $\psi\chi\eta$ for physical life and $\zeta\omega\eta$ for eternal life (see Van der Watt 2000a: *ad loc*). In 10:17–18,⁷⁸ Jesus explains that he lays down his physical life ($\psi\chi\eta$) and takes it up again. Thus, a connection is made between eternal life ($\zeta\omega\eta$) and physical life ($\psi\chi\eta$): Because Jesus has eternal life that can not die/fade away, he is able to lay down his physical life and take it up again. Put differently: Jesus possesses eternal life, and, as a result, he is able to control the physical aspect thereof, since the nature of the eternal life he possesses, qualitatively speaking, is unable to take away his physical life. The instant when Jesus raised himself from the dead and thereby restored (or ‘healed’) himself to life, the eschatological era of the Spirit arrived⁷⁹ (cf. 3:34–35; 7:37–39; 20:22). Naturally, this gift of the Spirit has to be read against the Old Testament’s expectation of the *life-bringing presence of the Spirit* in the eschatological end time, especially against the background of the Ezekiel pronouncements (cf. Van der Watt 2000a: *ad loc*).⁸⁰ It is God himself who fulfills his prophetic promises in the gift of the Spirit in and through Jesus.

After rising from the dead, Jesus appears to his disciples (20:19v). A moment or two later, He blows ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\eta\sigma\epsilon\nu$)⁸¹ over the disciples and they receive the Holy Spirit (20:22). In this way God’s involvement and presence in the

deliberately portrays Jesus as the agent who raises himself from the dead. It is Jesus who lays down his life and takes it up again (10:17–18). Nevertheless, he points out that the initiative comes from God and has to be understood as part of the mission of Jesus, but that Jesus raises himself. Jesus is only able to do this because of his intimate relationship with the Father and the fact that the Father endowed him with the necessary power. Indeed, it is in obedience to the command ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\omicron\lambda\eta\gamma\eta$) of the Father that Jesus does it all in the first place (10:18).

78 John 10:17–18 reads: “Διὰ τοῦτο με ὁ πατήρ ἀγαπᾷ ὅτι ἐγὼ τίθημι τὴν ψυχὴν μου, ἵνα πάλιν λάβω αὐτήν. ¹⁸οὐδεὶς αἶρει αὐτήν ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ, ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ τίθημι αὐτήν ἀπ’ ἐμαυτοῦ. ἐξουσίαν ἔχω θεῖναι αὐτήν, καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχω πάλιν λαβεῖν αὐτήν· ταύτην τὴν ἐντολὴν ἔλαβον παρὰ τοῦ πατρός μου.”

79 In 7:39, the flow of water streams is connected to the eschatological presence of the Spirit, which becomes a reality through the passion of Jesus.

80 Think, for example of Ezk 11:19; 18:31–32; 36:26–27; 37:1vv.

81 Scholars agree that $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\eta\sigma\epsilon\nu$ appears only here in the New Testament. These are most probably references to Genesis 2:7, where God blows breath or life into Adam (cf. LXX: $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\eta\sigma\epsilon\nu$), as well as Ezk 37:9 (cf. LXX: $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\eta\sigma\epsilon\nu$) where God blows life into the dead (dry) bones. Lindars (1972:611) is correct when he notes: “With this symbolic action Jesus fulfils the expectation of 1.33 and the promise of the Paraclete (cf. also 7.39) . . . This suggests that John sees the constitution of the Church after the Resurrection as a kind of new creation.” The theme of *new life* and the *recreation of lost potentialities for life* comes sharply to the fore here. Not only does Jesus restore his own brokenness by creating new life, but he also ‘blows’ this life and its potentialities onto the disciples and, eventually, onto humanity.

Jesus-event is unmistakably affirmed. At the same time this event points to Jesus commissioning his disciples when he sends them on their mission (20:21–23) after empowering them with the gift of the Holy Spirit. As such this is an act within God's plan of salvation (Van der Watt 2000a: *ad loc*). With this, the eschatological era of the Spirit arrives, with the unbelieving Thomas seeing the marks on the hands and feet of Jesus and crying out that the resurrected Jesus truly is Lord and God (20:28). In light of the resurrection, the cross-event is *reinterpreted, represented* in the sphere of δόξα, so that even the unbelieving Thomas can't help but view the cross as a display of divine power and glorification.

The resurrection of Jesus, as far as I am concerned, is not solely aimed at Jesus' own healing and restoration, just as his acts of healing on earth are always in service of God's Universal Narrative. Kysar (1986:30) notices that the Λόγος in 1:4 is defined as a divine agent of creation who continues to build on God's creative re-creation to the extent that all existence becomes dependant on the Word's ability to recreate. As such, the Word is the source of life. For Kysar, the Johannine concepts of 'life' and 'light' are indicative of a relationship-reality. John 1:5 draws a picture of a dualism prevalent in the Gospel, according to which the Word (who is 'light' and 'life') is in continuous conflict with darkness. For Kysar, 'darkness' is representative of the distortion of creation, the chaos of faithlessness and estrangement from God. Within the context of this cosmic conflict, 'darkness' is unable to overpower (κατέλαβεν) the Word, who represents 'life' and 'light'. This 'light' shines triumphantly over 'darkness' (6:33).

The resurrection of Jesus is ultimately in service of God's greater story of the healing and the restoration of a broken relationship (1:10–11) between Himself and the world (3:14–16; 20:30–31). Jesus is 'healed' physically and his 'brokenness' is restored through life-creating energy, in order that a broken world may ultimately be saved and also receive the same qualitative life potentialities within the family of God (1:12). In the context of 3:14–15 it is clearly voiced that the elevated Son of God will pull the world towards him (12:32) in love (3:16) in order that they may receive life (3:14–16; 20:30–31) and be able to see the revelation of his true identity (8:28). As 'light' of the world, Jesus enables mankind not to stay stuck and linger in the existential state of 'darkness' (12:46), but to cross over from an existential state of death to an existential state of life (5:24). Although John doesn't use the word 'reconcile' (ἰλασμός—cf. 1 Joh 2:22) in his Gospel, traces thereof are indeed visible in his theology. God 'reconciles' a world that lives in antagonism towards him (8:44), with himself, by sending his Son in order that those who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (3:16) and in order for them to become true sons and daughters of God (1:12). As such, the resurrection becomes the *great act of healing* in John's

Gospel, as will be argued in more depth later on in this book.⁸² In other words, God sent his Son (3:16) to bring about reconciliation between himself and the world by ‘healing’ the formerly broken relationship (cf. Jn 9:40–41; 12:41), and to create, in the process, qualitative existential life potentialities within the family of God (1:12).

8.3 The Connection between the Universal Godly Narrative⁸³ and the Heuristic Categories of Healing

EXCURSUS: John’s Universal Divine Narrative: A short overview

According to Reinhartz (1992), John can be read on at least three levels: the historical (Jesus), the ecclesiological (Johannine community) and the cosmological level. The UDN, or Universal Divine Narrative, is the Meta-narrative and takes place on a macro level. It tells the story of God, the Son and the world (cf. the cosmological level of Reinhartz 1992):

82 The cross, resurrection and ascension are presented as a theological unit in the Johannine text. In the process, the inseparable bond between the cross and the resurrection has been determined and proven exegetically and theologically. As such, the argument is strengthened that the cross can only be seen as $\delta\delta\xi\alpha$ in light of the resurrection. In John 11:14, the brokenness of the deadly-ill Lazarus eventually transitions into his death. Jesus illustrates that he is resurrection and life (11:25) by raising Lazarus from the dead. Previously, it was argued that Jesus restores Lazarus’ physical brokenness, which had already started decaying irreversibly. However, the implicit reader is left with a tension, seeing as it remains a question whether Jesus will be able to transform his own brokenness if and when his own body experiences irreversible brokenness. Through the resurrection, Jesus illustrates that he is indeed the essential embodiment of life by restoring himself from irrevocable brokenness and death to life. In this context, the resurrection becomes the culminating, life-giving act of restoration or healing in the Gospel, because the crucified Jesus ultimately draws the world to himself (12:32) and in that confers to believers the right to be children of God (1:12).

83 The initial idea for the UGN was given to me by my promoter. See Van der Watt (2000a: *ad loc*) for a full discussion of the UDN, or Universal Divine Narrative, which in his case was inspired by Reinhartz. Following Van der Watt (and Reinhartz 1992), I will reconstruct the UDN as I currently understand it. Therefore, this reconstruction represents my own interpretation of Van der Watt’s discussion of the UDN. Van der Watt was the first to inform me of the UDN and of the fact that the Gospel needs to be read on two (Reinhartz 1992—three) narrative levels. The local narrative is embedded in the meta-narrative of the UDN and is also inferior to this meta-narrative in the Gospel. As such, the current healing narrative in the Gospel needs to be read against the background or decor of the UDN. The local healing narrative ‘serves’ as vehicle or ‘sign’ for attaining the goal of the UDN (20:30–31).

From the beginning, Jesus was God (1:1) and involved with creation, since he was with God from the start, and was God himself. God loves his property and creation eternally, but his property doesn't know him. In some passages it is even expressed as hate (cf. 17:14; 3:20; 7:7; 15:18, 19, 23, 24, 25). The crisis in the UDN revolves around this reality of a broken relationship. The world loves 'darkness' more than 'light' (3:19). The relationship between God and man is essentially broken. The crisis is deepened by the fact that humanity is caught up in an existential state of death (5:24), 'darkness' (12:35, 46) and lies (8:44) and that they are children of the devil (8:44).

Because God loves the world and wants to restore or heal the broken relationship, he sends his only Son (3:16). The Son will build the bridge which will ultimately procure reconciliation by bringing God and man together. He will give those who used to be enemies of God the right to become children of God (1:12). This Son is God who became human (1:14). He is the 'ideal' One to come and bring revelation since he resides at God's bosom (1:18) and has seen God and know God's will. Therefore, he can reveal (ἐξηγήσατο) God's will to humanity. He does everything exactly like his Father taught him (5:19v). To be sure, the Son should be seen as a duplicate of the Father. Those who see him, see the Father (5:19). His words are God's words. His miracles illustrate exactly that. Jesus restores, heals and gives life to those who used to be sick, broken and impure in the same way God would have done. Jesus is the bridge-builder who restores people's position before God and, in that, restores both the vertical (God and human) and the horizontal (human to human) relationships. He is filled with grace and truth (1:14). Jesus raises a dead Lazarus, whose body had regressed irreversibly, back to life. By doing that, Jesus creates new existential possibilities for his friend Lazarus and simultaneously shows that he (Jesus) is the resurrection and life (11:25) and that he has power over life and death (cf. 11:1–44). In his prayer to the Father, he pleads with God to answer his prayer and allow those who are witnesses to see that he was sent by God (11:42). Among other things, the miracles in John serves the purpose of supporting the UDN. In a similar fashion, the resurrection will later on also serve as a 'sign' confirming that Jesus was sent by God and that he truly is the Son of God. Jesus will draw the world towards him when elevated on the cross. Like a seed, Jesus must first die (12:24) before abundant life (10:10) can be given. Resultantly, the death of Jesus is no *σκανδαλον*, but a sign of the display of power, reminiscent of a king, of *δόξα* (12:23).

The words and deeds of Jesus cause some to believe, while others hate and reject him (cf. Howard 2001:174). The growing opposition towards

Jesus eventually results in his trial, torture and crucifixion. Jesus is rejected by his own people, marginalised and, ultimately, he dies a bitter death. He is humiliated by his crucifixion, during which he experiences a true, socio-religious deconstruction of his status.

Nevertheless, the author of John wants to make it clear that Jesus himself decides to lay down his life for his sheep (10:11). Jesus has full authority and authorisation to lay down his life and take it up again (10:17). Consequently, Jesus illustrates that he has power over life and death and it serves as 'sign' that he truly was the Son of God. Humankind, however, can only see the Kingdom and spiritual reality of God through eyes of faith if and when it experiences the transformation of rebirth (3:3).

The resurrection as 'sign' (3:14) is taken up into the UDN mission framework. The resurrection serves, just like the raising of Lazarus (11:42), as proof that Jesus is the sent Son of God. The purpose of the sign is to lead people to faith. Thus, Thomas is led to his culminating confession in 20:28 within the direct context of the resurrection sign: "My Lord and my God!" The resurrection is the culminating miracle-sign within the Jesus-event and story.

The resurrection serves as proof of the fact that Jesus truly is the One who was sent, possessing life within himself; that he is the source of life (5:26), who offers life to those who believe (3:16; 5:24).

The humiliating brokenness and death of Jesus on the cross is interpreted by John as a glorification-event (δόξα) (3:14–15; 13:32). However, it is only seen as glorification in 'light' of the resurrection. The resurrection is the culminating miracle-sign, shining glorious life-creating 'light' back onto the Jesus-event and story. The totality of Jesus' mission is fulfilled in light of the resurrection. He conquered death and in that proved that he truly is the source of life, which explains why he is the one able to heal and repair. After the resurrection, he is no longer a mere ancient healer, wonder-worker or prophet. It is now clear that he is the Son of God, that his resurrection brought true, eternal healing and life.

The healing of the broken relationship between God and man, with its resulting existential possibilities within God's family, is intended for all the scattered children of God—the entire world (11:52). Jesus came to solve the existential crisis introduced by the UDN by repairing broken relationships and thereby effecting reconciliation between God and his world. Those who believe the UDN will receive eternal life as a gift (3:16; 20:31), a life which will lead to the restoration and healing. As such, the resurrection becomes a theological symbol of hope, witnessing of "the

claim that conventional definitions of reality do not contain or define what God will yet do in Israel" (Brueggemann 1995:xvii).

In this section of the book, the Jesus-event will be connected to single heuristic categories identified in the healing acts of Jesus and briefly referred to above, i.e.: That Jesus, as *transforming agent* in John, repeatedly heals/restores *those* who find themselves in an existential crisis-situation, *disorientation* and some type of "death" or disorientation. The situation of disorientation makes room for a situation of *reorientation* when Jesus creates new *existential possibilities* by healing the sick via an *interaction of transformation* and by restoring their brokenness.

In the process, it will be argued why, from a cultural perspective, the resurrection of Jesus should be interpreted as *the* culminating act of healing. But first, some symbolic-anthropologic perspectives are discussed to illuminate the subject:

8.3.1 *The Jesus-Event and -Narrative in Light of Heuristic Categories Pertaining to the Acts of Healing*

EXCURSUS: Symbolic-anthropologic perspectives on the passion narrative

Many conversations about the resurrection, stagnate in discussions surrounding its historicity. Together with McVann (1988:96), I experience a growing discomfort with Western ethnocentric approaches to the meaning of the resurrection: "Studies like Matera's indicate dissatisfaction with exclusively, or nearly exclusively, historical methods and results" pertaining to the resurrection and its understanding. McVann points us to the positive development in the study of metaphors, symbols and narratives. In his article, he examines the passion narrative of Jesus from a symbolic-anthropologic perspective. In the process, he adapts Victor Turner's (1969) theory on the *rites de passage* and applies it to the passion narrative.⁸⁴

Symbolic anthropologists study the symbolic systems of cultures. Culture is seen as "the whole array of interlocking symbols and sets of symbol systems" (McVann 1988:97). According to symbolic anthropologists, cultural values are chiefly expressed, mediated and affirmed through *rituals*. Rituals are, then, symbolic in nature since they serve as 'vehicles'

84 See Turner 1969:94–130 for the original context from which McVann (1988) developed his data.

mediating cultural values. McVann (1988:97) explains that Turner (1969) is particularly interested in those specific junctions in the systemic cultural matrix where a change or reorientation occurs relative to the flow of normal living conditions or life experiences. In such a context, Turner (referred to by McVann 1988:97) refers to these rituals as “*rituals of status transformation*”:

At these points culture has instituted rites of initiation and passage during the course of which the status of initiates is radically altered. The three steps in this ritual cultural process are: 1) *separation* of participants in the rite of passage from the ordinary rhythm of the larger group's life; 2) their *enclosure* in a culturally indeterminate state called liminality; and 3) *aggregation*, that is, reintegration into society with the identity and capacities for fulfilling their new obligations in society fully and firmly in place.⁸⁵

MCVANN 1988:97

McVann (1988:97) continues to interpret the arrest, trial and passion narrative as a *Ritual of Liminality*:

The Arrest

McVann (1988:97) argues: “The arrest of Jesus inaugurates his period of liminality and marks him off from any world where he has a positive role or standing . . . he is outside the law, severed from the Jewish people and made unclean. . . . a pollutant.” According to McVann, Jesus accepts the injustice of the arrest and accusation against him because he knows that he will go through the process and emerge on the other side as a being with a renewed ontological status.

The trial

McVann (1988:98) is of the opinion that the liminality of Jesus increases in intensity after his arrest. In accordance with the passion narrative of Mark, he argues that the arrest is followed by trial under Pontius Pilate, derision by the Sanhedrin (14:65), humiliation when he is crowned with thorns (15:15,17), spat at (15:19) and undressed (15:20). McVann (1988:98) gives a striking summary: “All traces of any former status must be stripped away, and the initiates reduced to a condition out of which a new kind of being may spring to life.” Although the *initiate* is humiliated, he knows that the process will ultimately enable a higher status as a consequence.

85 Cf. Turner (1969:93–110).

At the end of the process, the initiate emerges transformed. Naturally, this happens with the resurrection as well . . .

The Crucifixion

McVann (1988:99) notices: "The climax of Jesus' ritual comes at his crucifixion, and symbols of liminality are most heavily concentrated at this point . . . Jesus' new status is eventually achieved through the ritual of suffering and death." McVann (1999:100) is correct when he notes that Jesus had to go through the whole process of status deconstruction in order to emerge at the point of glorification:

"This new station in life for which Jesus had been prepared is, of course, his exaltation which comes with the resurrection. God endows Jesus with a transformed ontological status: he becomes Lord and King of his followers to whom he is restored at the resurrection" (McVann 1988:100). The content of McVann's discussion corresponds to important elements extrapolated from the identified heuristic categories pertaining to acts of healing:

Orientation: In terms of process, the crisis situation of Jesus' earthly rejection and death follows upon an orientation situation. John depicts Jesus as the pre-existing Son of God (cf. John 1:1–4), who exists in the *ideal position of existential possibilities* by being at the Father's bosom (1:19) and being one with the Father (John 10:30). Against the background of the Jewish Temple-orientation and its centripetal socio-religious system, which revolves around holiness, wholeness, purity, order, etcetera, Jesus is now placed at the centre. With regard to God and his Family, Jesus finds himself in the ideal position of existential potentialities.

The crisis is seen as the point of origin or the original stimulus that leads to disorientation within the systemic cultural matrix, relative to the inherent values of that particular culture. Within the cultural matrix of Temple-oriented Judaism, the crisis situation is indicative of the fact that there is displacement from the centripetal socio-religious cartography. In the Gospel, a definite tension exists between Jesus and the representatives of the socio-religious system of the day (cf. John 9). Jesus is labelled as unclean and out of place. The crisis intensifies with a growing opposition towards Jesus, ultimately culminating in his arrest and death.⁸⁶

86 Turner (1969:95), quoted by McVann (1988:97), states: "Liminal entities, such as neophytes in initiation or puberty rites, may be represented as possessing nothing. They may . . . wear

Disorientation: When Jesus dies, it seems, if viewed through faithless human eyes, as if the totality of Jesus' mission coagulates and is rendered impotent. After the death of Jesus, the disciples are to be found behind closed doors, in fear of the Jews (20:19). They are powerless and unsure in their disorientation, residing in a position of astonished liminality.⁸⁷

Transformation Agent(s) are responsible for the ritual of status transformation. These agent(s) have complete authority to take *initiates* through the ritual. In Turner's model, these agents of transformation refer to *ritual elders*. In the case of the healing paradigm, God is the agent of transformation with complete authority to heal, restore and reconcile (i.e. give life) in and through Jesus. Elsewhere, I have argued in depth that Jesus, as he is portrayed in John's Gospel, is himself the agent of transformation who lays down his own life in order to take it up again (10:17–18).

Transformation Interaction is defined as the point at which the interaction between the agent of transformation and the *initiates* leads to the transformation of the *initiate*. Turner describes this moment as the transformation of the *initiate's* status. As agent of transformation, Jesus is the one who takes up his own life, after having just laid it down, in order to raise from the dead.

only a strip of clothing, or even go naked, to demonstrate that as liminal beings they have no status . . . rank or role . . ." For example, one can think of lepers who were forced to stay outside city walls (cf. Mark 1:40–45 and other texts to do with leprosy).

- 87 Liminality is a position between two states: *Societas* represents the structured composition of culture, where order, safety, security, hierarchic leadership and societal structure govern. Modern existential experiences, as opposed to those of post-modernism, can be compared to the *societas* experience. Some or other internal or external crisis then leads to the position of liminality, which is a threshold-experience. The crisis deconstructs the security and established structure of the *societas*. The individual or society experiences disorientation, insecurity and uncertainty when in a *position of liminality*. In the mentioned article, McVann (1988:97) quotes Turner (1969:95) to explain the meaning of liminality: "Thus liminality is frequently linked with death . . . and to an eclipse of the sun or moon." *Communitas* refers to existential experiences of flexibility, egalitarian leadership and uncertainty introduced by the crisis. The *communitas* situation naturally represents less security than the *societas* situation, accompanied by feelings of relativism and border replacement, which leads to feelings of relative structurelessness. To a degree, the post-modern existential experience can be likened to a *communitas* situation.

Reorientation: This process necessarily follows upon the transformation of status that just occurred. The individual or group undergoes a transformation, having just passed through the previous stages successfully. In other words, there is a break with the previous and an embracement of the new existential situation. This situation of reorientation and status transformation leads to a representation of ‘self’ and of ‘reality’. After the successful completion of the status transformation ritual, the new status is socially acknowledged by society, which leads to the realising of new existential possibilities.

The Realisation of existential possibilities is defined as the readmittance of the transformed *initiates* into the cultural system, a process which McVann calls ‘*aggregation*’: where the individual experiences reintegration within the particular culture with a transformed identity and capacity to live out new existential possibilities within a new existential situation.

8.3.1.1 Orientation: Ideal Position of Existential Possibilities Honour and Shame

According to Malina, Van der Watt and Joubert (1995: *ad loc*), the ancient person’s value and its acknowledgement was an important factor in life. Honour was the public acknowledgement of an individual’s value or worth and could be achieved in a variety of ways: In the first place, honour was linked to the *group* an individual belonged to. Within the strong patriarchal orientation of the first century Mediterranean world, an individual strived his whole life to maintain his honourable position within society (Malina et al. 1995: *ad loc*). Honour was the public acknowledgement of an individual’s worth by others. Should an individual be born as part of an honourable family or clan, he or she was by implication considered to be an honourable person. On the other hand, the opposite was also true. Should a person come from shameful parents, he or she was, by implication, considered to be a shameful person, seeing as his or her identity was inextricably linked to the group he or she belonged to. Compare, for example, the negative judgment of children born from impermissible intercourse in Deuteronomy 23:2–4:⁸⁸

לֹא־יָבֹא פְצוּע־דָּבָא וּכְרוֹת שְׂפָכָה בְּקֶהֱל יְהוָה:

88 Translation (KJV) of Dt 23:2—“A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD.”

Such individuals could not become members of Israel for ten generations. In other words, honour was “hereditary”. Honour could also be achieved if a very important person, like a Caesar, king or deity, consigned it to a person or group. Malina et al. (1996: *ad loc*) notes: “Persons could, however, gain honor if a prominent person, such as an emperor, king or god, conferred it on him. When an emperor granted Roman citizenship to a town or city, the status of all the citizens was immediately and dramatically raised.”⁸⁹ Since ancient Mediterranean people were group-oriented personalities and not individualistic in the modern Western sense, the group an individual belonged to was *the* paramount factor when it came to honour. The individual’s good name was maintained only if the group acknowledged that individual’s honour. The individual’s honour and its acknowledgement was closely related to his or her conduct and how it aligned with the group’s norms, values and protocol. It goes without saying that, in this context, it was of paramount importance for individuals to be cognisant of the group’s norms and the types of behaviour deemed acceptable by the group.

In light hereof, it is noteworthy to consider the words of Jesus when he says in 5:19: “ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐ δύναται ὁ υἱὸς ποιεῖν ἄφ’ ἑαυτοῦ οὐδὲν ἐὰν μὴ τι βλέπῃ τὸν πατέρα ποιούντα· ὃ γὰρ ἂν ἐκεῖνος ποιῇ, ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ”⁹⁰ and in 5:41: “Δόξαν παρὰ ἀνθρώπων οὐ λαμβάνω.”⁹¹ Jesus demands honour based both on his intimate relationship with the Father (cf. 7:18; 8:49; 8:50; 12:26; See Wengst 2000:316) and on the fact that his honour originates with God himself (8:50). Wilckens (1998:152) rightly states: “Sie verletzen seine Ehre, die ja die Ehre Gottes ist.”

In the ancient world, an honourable son lived his life in accordance with the will of his father (Malina et al. 1995: *ad loc*). Jesus does exactly that. He does the will of his Father. As a result, Jesus deserves honour due to his Father. In reference to this, Jesus notes in 5:23: “ἵνα πάντες τιμῶσι τὸν υἱὸν καθὼς τιμῶσι τὸν πατέρα. ὃ μὴ τιμῶν τὸν υἱὸν οὐ τιμᾷ τὸν πατέρα τὸν πέμψαντα αὐτόν.” Gnllka (1983:42) states accordingly: “Ziel der Vollmachtsübertragung ist die Ehre des Sohnes. Gottesverehrung ist ohne Christusverehrung nicht mehr möglich.” Wengst (2000:198–199) agrees and states: “Die hier vorgenommene Entsprechung zwischen Vater und Sohn ist nicht anders zu verstehen als in

89 If a Caesar, for example, consigns Roman citizenship to a certain city or town, the status of all the inhabitants were immediately increased dramatically.

90 Translation of John 5:19 (KJV)—“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things so ever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.”

91 Translation of John 5:41: “I receive not honour from men.”

V.21f.: Es gilt, im Sohn den Vater zu Ehren. In Analogie zu 12,44 könnte man auch formulieren: Wer den Sohn ehrt, ehrt nicht den Sohn, sondern eben darin den, der ihn gesandt hat. Es gibt keine isoliert für sich stehende Verehrung des Sohnes. Das wäre offenbar Götzendienst.” Precisely for this reason, it becomes simple: “Wer den Sohn nicht ehrt, ehrt nicht den Vater, der ihn geschickt hat” (Wengst 2000:199).

*Jesus has Honour: He is, After All, the Son of God*⁹²

In the prologue, Jesus’ identity and unique relationship to God is described unambiguously— Jesus is described as the Word (λόγος), who stands in an intimate relation to God (1:1—“Ὁ ἄρχὴ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.”). The purpose of Jesus’ mission was to reveal God to the world (cf. 1:18; Gnlika 1983:16; Van der Watt 2000a:60;83).⁹³ Schnelle (1998:43) notices: “Jesus ist der Exeget Gottes, er allein vermag wirklich Kunde vom Vater zu bringen. Mit der Inkarnation ging auch die einmalige und unmittelbare Gotteserfahrung Jesu in die Geschichte ein und ist nun für die Menschen als Offenbarung des Gottesohnes vernehmbar.”

It is obvious that a *special, unique relationship* exists between God and the Word, or the Father and the Son. The Son visibly manifests the invisible Father for mankind in and through the Son’s incarnation. The Word is described as the light of the world (1:4, 9), who became flesh in order to offer humanity eternal life (3:16). The reader, thus, depicts Jesus as a special kind of human being, someone with honour and status, someone who originates from God. Jesus not only possesses “inherited” honour and status on grounds of his birth, but God himself is a witness thereof (1:32–34), and so is John the Baptist (Gnlika 1983:20; Schnelle 1998:50–51; Wengst 2000:1.86).

Schnelle (1998:106) explains: “Mit Tod und Leben benennt Johannes die beiden möglichen Grundformen menschlicher Existenz.” According to the Gospel of John, the (unbelieving) world is caught up in a deadly existential existence (cf. 5:24). The symbolic universe within the Gospel clearly puts forward a dualistic contrast without any grey areas. Maier (1984:1.219) is correct in noticing: “Deshalb kann es sein, dass ein quiklebendiger, vitaler Mensch noch im ‘Tode’, d. h. in seinen Sünden ist . . .” Throughout the Gospel, a clear contrast is visible: ‘life’ versus ‘death’, ‘light’ versus ‘darkness’, ‘truth’ versus ‘lies’, ‘love’

92 See the list of Christological titles presented by the author to describe Jesus’ identity from the very beginning. In this way, the author orients the reader to understand who Jesus really is. See Jn 1:23, 26,27,29,30,33,34,36,38, 41,45,49, 51.

93 The term λόγος refers to the Word as revelation of God (Köstenberger 2004:25).

versus 'hate', 'good' versus 'evil', etc. The Father sent his Son to bring 'light',⁹⁴ life and truth' to a world drenched in 'darkness, death and lies'. Schnelle (1998:107–108) indicates that: "Im Hören auf die Stimme des Offenbaren eröffnet sich jetzt in der Begegnung mit Jesus die Möglichkeit für den Menschen, sein dem Unheil verfallenes Dasein zu überwinden und in die Lebenswelt Gottes einzutreten."

After all, God is the primary source of 'life', 'light' and 'truth' (6:57) and the locus of control, in terms of honour and shame, lies with God. For John, honour is determined with reference to a given individual's or group's relationship with God and his Son, Jesus (5:23; 8:50; 12:26). This is exactly why the Father *teaches*⁹⁵ and *empowers* his Son like an ancient father would teach his own son. Like a king *conferred his authority*⁹⁶ to the one he sent, the Father confers his authority to the Son (Van der Watt 2000a and 2000b; See Dietzfelbinger 2001:168). This is why the Son can give life to whomever he wants and judge whomever he wants (5:21; Maier 1984:1.215; Wilckens 1998:117) in "*königlicher Vollmacht*" (Dietzfelbinger 2001:168; cf. 18:37; 19:17–22).⁹⁷ Wherever Jesus is, one encounters godly qualities like 'life' and 'truth' (1:4; Gnllka 1983:14; Schnackenburg 1990:1.242–244). According to John, godly qualities are bound up with the person of Jesus. Van der Watt (2000a:150) is of the opinion that Jesus is the 'new temple', the place for worship. Jesus is 'purity'. The salvation plan is completely christologised in the Gospel according to John.

In 5:17, Jesus emphasises the idea that he is busy working like his Father is busy working (Ridderbos 1997:196; Morris 1995:273; Brown 1966:213).⁹⁸ In the passage surrounding 5:19, Jesus makes a weighty announcement. He says that he is unable (οὐ δύναται) to do (οὐ δύναται) anything (or: nothing) (οὐδέν) on his own (ἑαυτοῦ), except (ἐὰν μὴ) what he sees (βλέπῃ)⁹⁹ the Father do (τὸν πατέρα ποιοῦντα).¹⁰⁰ Jesus makes the loaded statement that whatever the Father does (ἃ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ποιεῖ), he, as the Son, does in exactly the same way (ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ). In essence, Jesus claims to be "duplicating" the

94 Holleran (1993).

95 See the discussion in previous chapters (John 5) of the teaching process in the Ancient Mediterranean context and how it is relevant to Jesus.

96 See the foregoing chapters, where a full discussion focuses on the practice of sending an agent in Ancient times (John 5).

97 Schnelle (1998:107) notices: "Glaube und Heil fallen ebenso zusammen wie Unglauben und Gericht."

98 The word construction in 5:19, Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν, indicates intensification. Hendriksen (1976:198) translates this introductory formula with: "I must solemnly assure you".

99 Verb: Present Subjunctive Active.

100 Verb: Present Participle Active.

Father (Carson 1991:247; Wilckens 1998:116; See Anderson¹⁰¹ 2011: *ad loc* 933).¹⁰² If people look at the works of Jesus, they see, by implication, the Father's own works (5:19, 30; 7:17, 28). Wengst (2000:196) notices: "Der Sohn macht nur, 'was er den Vater machen sieht'. Daher kommt dessen Tun in seinem Tun zum Zuge. Der Sohn macht nichts anderes, nicht Eigenes, sondern eben das, 'was jener macht.'" Wilckens (1998:116) is correct when he notices: "Es gehört zu der Offenbarungslehre, die Jesus als vom Vater gesandter Sohn zu verkündigen und zu vertreten hat."

Jesus qualifies and intensifies this process even further (5:20): He says that these things can be attributed (ὁ γὰρ) to the fact that the Father loves the Son (πατὴρ φιλεῖ¹⁰³ τὸν υἱόν) and shows (δείκνυσιν)¹⁰⁴ him everything (πάντα) he does (ποιεῖ). As such, Jesus claims to be part of a close relationship with the Father (Wengst 2000:196–197; Wilckens 1998:116–117).¹⁰⁵ Consequently, John argues that whoever sees Jesus, sees the Father (14:9). In any case, it is only the Son who has had the privilege of seeing the Father (1:18; 5:37; 6:46). Truth be told, Jesus was at his Father's bosom and is therefore in the ideal position to reveal the Father to all of humanity (1:18). Jesus himself saw how the Father did certain things (5:19) and heard from the Father's mouth what to say to people on earth (12:49). Gnilka (1983:113) notes that "Jesus gemeinschaft is Gottesgemeinschaft, in Jesus wirkt und redet Gott, Umgang mit Jesus ist Gottesschau! Er ist mit dem Vater völlig geeint, wie die Immanenzformeln (ich in ihm—er in mir) sagen." According to Wilckens (1998:53), the image of

101 Anderson (2011: *ad loc* 930) provides a good discussion on this matter under the heading "The Father-Son relationship: Equal or Subordinate?". He distinguishes between an "agency-of-commission" category and a "status of being" category in reference to the relationship between Father and Son as well as between believers and the Father and Son and states that "Believers thus share a oneness of agency rather than a metaphysical oneness of being with the Son". The implication for Anderson is clearly that in John's view Jesus is "[T]o be equated with the Father precisely because he is sent from the Father; to receive him is to receive the Father, but to reject him is to forfeit the approval of the One who sent him" (Anderson 2011: *ad loc* 963).

102 Hendriksen (1976:198) speaks of "flawless correspondence".

103 Verb: Present Indicative Active of φιλέω.

104 Verb: Present Indicative Active of δείκνυμι. Louw and Nida (1989: *ad loc*) explains it under sub-domain 28.47 as such: "δείκνυμι or δεικνύω; ὑποδείκνυμι: to make known the character or significance of something by visual, auditory, gestural, or linguistic means—to make known, to demonstrate, to show."

105 Louw and Nida (1989: *ad loc*) explains it under sub-domain 25.33 as such: "φιλέω; φιλία, ας f: to have love or affection for someone or something based on association—to love, to have affection for." This implies a love rooted in a close relationship."

Jacob's ladder (Gen 28:12) is used to explain the quality of the revelation of Jesus (cf. 1:51):

Die Formulierung ruft die biblischer Erzählung vom Traum Jakobs in Bethel Gen 28,10ff. ins Gedächtnis. Möglicherweise war solche Deutung die Brücke zu der Deutung in Joh 1,51, in der dann an die Stelle Jakob/Israels Jesus als 'der Menschensohn' getreten ist. Jedenfalls ist es dies, was die *Jünger* im Bilde von Gen 28,12 sehen sollen: Über *Jesus* ist der Himmel offen und er steht in ständiger Kommunikation mit Gott.¹⁰⁶

WILCKENS 1998:53

John 1:51 mentions that the heavens (οὐρανὸν) will open and that angels (messengers) will move up and down (Köstenberger 2004:84–85).¹⁰⁷ According to Van der Watt (2000a:48), the οὐρανὸν was the home of divine presence, where the reality of Jesus' revelation has its origin (See Ridderbos 1997:93).¹⁰⁸ Köstenberger (2004:86) is of the opinion that Jesus means to say in this context that: "He will mediate greater revelation than Abraham (8:58), Jacob (4:12–14), Moses (1:17–18; 5:45–47; 9:28–33), and Isaiah (12:37–41). Jesus is the 'new Bethel,' the place where God is revealed, where heaven and earth, God and humankind, meet . . ."¹⁰⁹

In 5:20, Jesus says that God will show him *even greater works* than these (μείζονα τούτων δείξει), with the result that the Jews will be left in wonderment (θαυμάζητε) (Ridderbos 1997:95).¹¹⁰ This refers to *the gift of life and the resurrection of people from the dead*.¹¹¹ In 5:21, we read: For as the Father raises up (ἐγείρει) the dead (τοὺς νεκροὺς), and makes them alive (ζωοποιεῖ); even so (οὕτως) the Son restores/brings to life (ζωοποιεῖ) whom he will (θέλει). One of

106 John 1:51: Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὄψεσθε τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεωγμένον καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναβαίνοντας καὶ καταβαίνοντας ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

107 This expression accords to the fact that Ancients believed that the earth was flat and that the heavens were just above the earth. Angels could move between a heavenly and an earthly space to bring messages to people on earth.

108 In John, the heavens are the residential address of the Father and the angels are his messengers. This means that Jesus becomes the visibility of God in heaven (See Van der Watt 2000a:83).

109 See also Carson (1991:163–164; Witherington 1995:72; Schnackenburg 1990:1.320).

110 Beasley-Murray (1987:76) says: "This is to be seen in the 'greater works' that will be shown to the Son, and that will cause the Jews to marvel. Naturally they will also point to the greater realities of the Kingdom of God, which however the Jews will not be able to perceive."

111 Hendriksen (1976:199).

the most honourable tasks God gave Jesus was to bestow life (3:16; 20:30–31).¹¹² On the reverse side of giving life there is judgment and death (5:22), something that was, according to Old Testament belief, the exclusive prerogative of God (cf. Gn 18:25; See Jdg 11:27; Ps 2:2). In light hereof, Jesus says in John 5:22: “For the Father judges (κρίνει) no man (οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ κρίνει οὐδένα), but had committed all judgment (τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν) unto the Son (δέδωκεν τῷ υἱῷ).”¹¹³ However, Wilckens (1998:117) makes the following important remark: “Die Übertragen ‘des ganzen Gerichts’ auf den Sohn bedeutet nicht, dass der Vater sich damit aus dem Gericht völlig herausgezogen habe und nun nur noch der Sohn der einzige Richter sei. In 12,47f, ist das Gegenteil zu lesen. Der Sinn der Aussage ist: Gottes Richten fällt mit Jesu Richten zusammen.” Nevertheless, the ‘schism’ (3:19) is between believers and non-believers, eternal life and eternal death (5:24), children of the devil (8:44) and children of God (cf. 1:12).

8.4 Summary

As the Son of God, Jesus possesses inherited honour and status (1:32–34). He was with God and is himself God (1:1). Jesus is the Word¹¹⁴ (1:1–2), who stands in an intimate relationship with the Father; with the purpose of introducing the Father to the world (1:18); He is, in other words, the Revealer of God. As Word, he is the ‘light’ of the world (1:4, 9vv.), who became human (1:9, 14). In other words, the *incarnation* of Jesus enables him to make *visible* the invisible, eternal God (revealing him to the world). Seen as such, the Gospel is about making God and his substance known to people. John 5:19vv. describes how the Father ‘trains’ and ‘teaches’ Jesus. The works shown to the Son by the Father are qualified as *works that give life* (5:20–21—ὁ γὰρ πατὴρ φιλεῖ τὸν υἱὸν καὶ πάντα

112 Witherington (1995:142) says: “Part of what the Father has authorized and empowered the Son to do is to give life, to be able to raise the dead—a power early Jews believed was solely in the hands of God.” See also his discussion of Jesus as Agent, who was sent by the Father (1995:140–142). According to Köstenberger (2004:87) the “larger things” refer not only to the gift of life, but “will be seen in the ever-escalating series of ‘signs’ performed by Jesus...” As far as I’m concerned, the *semeia* doesn’t only culminate in the death and crucifixion of Jesus, but also in the resurrection, as the greatest sign of life and escape from death.

113 Ridderbos (1997:8) argues that the intimate bond between God and Jesus has direct implications for the *power over life and judgment* as a necessary result of this relationship.

114 Metaphorically, λόγος (Word) refers to a revelation-event. Köstenberger (2004:25) explains: “The designation ‘Word’—used in a Christological sense...[C]onveys the notion of divine self-expression or speech. ... [G]od’s self-revelation in salvation history.”

δείκνυσιν αὐτῷ ὃ αὐτὸς ποιεῖ).¹¹⁵ The reverse of life is judgment (5:22,29–30). *Jesus brings life* like his Father brings life,¹¹⁶ since he has life within him (5:26). The fact that Jesus is able to give life to whomever he wants, illustrates the *unity* (and dependency) between him and the Father (5:21; 3:34–35). Similarly, the Son *judges* like the Father would judge (5:30), to the extent that John feels free to say that the Father doesn't judge anymore (5:22). The teaching process entails not only a transfer of knowledge, but also the *empowerment* of the Son.¹¹⁷ This is precisely why Jesus can *give life to whomever he wants*. *Life is therefore a gift* from the Father through the Son to those who believe and, as a result, belong to God. In imitation of God (5:18vv.), *Jesus brings life where there used to be death*. He is rejected in his human form (1:10–11), but those who believe in him and know who he is, receive eternal life (or put differently, are being born from God in order to be his children—1:12–13). Jesus is the *ideal agent* who faithfully completes the tasks of his Father, like healing the sick, who lack existential potentialities. In doing this, Jesus not only restores their biological and socio-religious potentialities, but more importantly, he gives them (eternal) life and eschatological potentialities within the family of God. Jesus is the essential embodiment of an individual finding himself in the *centre of the socio-religious cartography*. Jesus actually finds himself in the centre of the entirety of creation, because he is God himself and was involved with creation from the beginning. Jesus is at home at his Father's bosom, which truly puts him in the ideal position of existential potentialities. After all, he is Lord and God. In terms of the centripetal socio-religious matrix of Judaism, Jesus stands in the middle.

8.4.1 *Crisis of the Universal Divine Narrative*

Although Jesus occupies an ideal existential position in that he is in a close relationship with God and possesses honour in God's eyes, in a certain sense he

115 Barrett (1978:260) argues convincingly that “to raise the dead was a prerogative of God himself.”

116 The question could rightly be asked whether the gift of life should only be understood metaphorically. The healing narratives indicated clearly that Jesus gave concrete biological and socio-religious life potentialities to the sick. However, it is important not to see the healing acts as a purpose in and of itself. The power of Jesus to grant physical and socio-religious potentialities of existence illustrates precisely the fact that he possesses authority over life and death. The functional healing, in this sense, points to the “true”, optimal eschatological healing Jesus brings. This illustrates the connection between healing and (eternal) life. See Barrett (1978:260), who links this life to a physical, eschatological and futuristic life.

117 In Jn 3:35, it is said that the Father leaves everything in the Son's hands.

occupies an unfavourable position on earth (Cf. hate in 3:20; 7:7; 15:18–19, 23–24; 17:14). This leads to immense tension in the Gospel according to John: “Das aber ist das Gericht, dass das Licht in die Welt gekommen ist und die Menschen die Finsternis mehr liebten als das Licht” (Maier 1984:126). The reality is that the Word came to the world, his property, but that they do not acknowledge or accept him (1:10–11: ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω. 11 εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον). *In line with what was just said, the Jewish leaders fail to honour Jesus, and refuse to acknowledge his status as Son of God, who was sent by God.* This is exactly the crisis that presents itself within the larger context of the Gospel. The loving conduct of Jesus in adherence to his Father’s agenda (3:16) is misinterpreted and ultimately leads to his *rejection* and *death*. The negative cycle centres around rejection and misinterpretation, and can be portrayed by this graphic:¹¹⁸

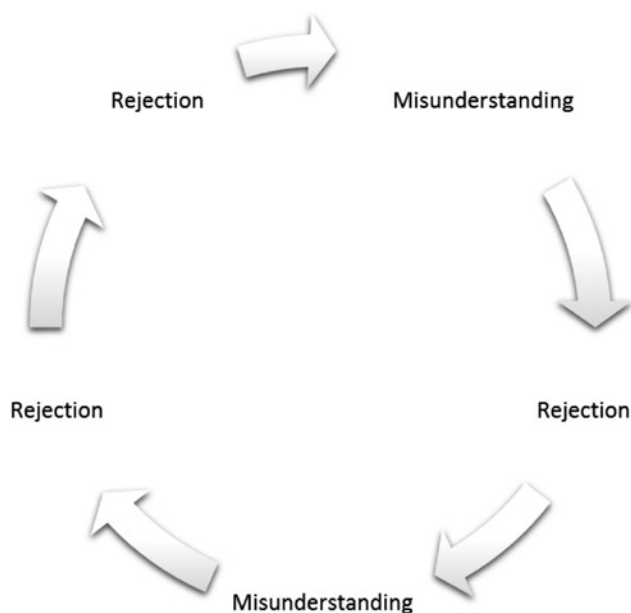


FIGURE 5 *Misunderstanding and rejection.*

¹¹⁸ If the words “misunderstanding” and “rejection” are read clock-wise, the sensitive reader will quickly notice that the rhythm and internal logic of the system is interrupted and repeatedly excludes the formation of meaning. This is how the Jews make connections according to the tradition, but in the process they are unaware of the discontinuity that sets in.

With regard to the raising of Lazarus and the Jewish reaction to it, Schnelle (1998:194) observes the following:

Es entspricht joh. Ironie und Dramatiek, wenn das grösste Wunder Jesu zum Anlass für den endgültigen Todesbeschluss wird. Der Evangelist nimmt die kreuzestheologischen Implikationen der Lazarusperikope auf und verdeutlicht noch einmal, dass die Auferweckung des Lazarus Jesu Schicksal vorwegnimmt. Zunächst wird von der durch das Wunder herbeigeführten Krisis berichtet. Niemand kann sich gegenüber einer solchen Tat Jesu neutral verhalten, vielmehr führt sie zu Entscheidungen und Scheidungen.

SCHNELLE 1998:194

In John 20:30–31, the author explains why he wrote the Gospel. From all available Jesus material, the author made a certain selection and presented it to the reader in a way that would convince him or her that Jesus is the sent Son of God, so that the reader may attain eternal life by believing this. Some accept Jesus and his message, while others reject him (1:11–12). The words and deeds of Jesus gave rise to *conflict between him and the Jewish leaders*. In and through his conduct, he carried out the works of his Father and offered people life, with its associated existential potentialities (5:21). The irony is that the Jews were blind and unable to see who Jesus truly is (9:39–41) and “[I]n Blindheit verharret (Schnelle 1998:174), or, as Haenchen (1980:575) puts it: “Es muss verstockt gewesen sein, das es seinen eigenen König nicht erkannte (19,15)”.

Jesus often criticised the Jewish leaders and the socio-religious system of the day. Loyalty to Jesus implies that people will “buy into” Jesus’ critique against the Jews. The result is a growing disloyalty towards Jewish leaders, something they can’t afford. The underlying fear of the Jews is articulated in John 11:47–48:¹¹⁹ “⁴⁷Συνήγαγον οὖν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι συνέδριον καὶ ἔλεγον· τί ποιοῦμεν ὅτι οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος πολλὰ ποιεῖ σημεῖα; ⁴⁸ἐὰν ἀφώμεν αὐτὸν οὕτως,

119 Translation of John 11:47–48: “⁴⁷ Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? For this man doeth many miracles. ⁴⁸ If we let him thus alone, all *men* will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.” [Emphasis mine].

πάντες πιστεύουσιν εἰς αὐτόν,¹²⁰ καὶ ἐλεύσονται οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι καὶ ἀροῦσιν ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν τόπον¹²¹ καὶ τὸ ἔθνος".¹²²

The crisis of the Universal Divine Narrative, as explained above, entails the reality that Jesus was with God at the beginning and involved in creation (1:1). God unendingly loves his property, which he sculpted, but his property doesn't know him. In some passages it is even expressed in terms of hatred (cf. 17:14; 3:20; 7:7; 15:18, 19, 23, 24, 25). *The Crisis in the Universal Divine Narrative revolves around the reality of this broken relationship.* The world however, loves 'darkness' more than 'light' (3:19). Consequently, an essentially broken relationship exists between God and man (Morris 1995:412). The crisis is intensified by the fact that mankind is caught up in a state of existence associated with death (5:24), 'darkness' (12:35, 46) and lies (8:44), and that "[N]icht Abraham und nicht Gott, sondern vielmehr der Teufel der eigentliche 'Vater' der angesprochenen Juden ist..." (Wilckens 1998:150) (cf. 8:44- ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστὲ). This is why they don't know Him and reject him (Ridderbos 1997:316; Wilckens 1998:150). Even when he raises the dead (Joh 11), they stay blind (9:40-41; 12:40) and conspire to kill him (11:45-57).

Jesus is arrested for being a blasphemer (10:33) (Cf. Malina, Van der Watt and Joubert 1995: *ad loc*).¹²³ The eventual charge against Jesus is that he said

120 Kysar (1986:184) notices that there is a close connection in John's Gospel between the outer sensory experience and the faith that follows it: "To see the manifestation of God in Christ is often a prerequisite of faith and leads to faith" (See 11:40; 20:8 1:39, 46).

121 "Holy place" refers to the Temple in Jerusalem. Kysar (1986:185) sees an obvious irony in this passage: "Even though they take action against Jesus, the Romans nonetheless do exactly as the Pharisees fear." Kysar refers to the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 AD. See also Bultmann (1971:410).

122 Ridderbos (1997:408) is of the opinion that this is the first time the conflict between Jesus and the Jews centres around a political motive. In all previous accounts, the conflict revolved around the charge that Jesus said and did blasphemous things. In this passage, a strong political motive for the persecution of Jesus comes to the fore. Jesus apparently had a great number of people following him. This could give the impression that Jesus was a political leader, who could lead a revolt against the Jewish socio-religious system. Such a political revolt would not have been tolerated by the Romans. According to Ridderbos, it is clear that the Jews had an inherent fear for Roman government intervention.

123 As discussed, honour and shame were the most important values in a first century Mediterranean context. *Honour* essentially revolved around a person's value as a human being and the acknowledgement thereof by others. The opposite of honour was shame, which, in essence, had to do with a person's sensitivity for his public reputation, particularly applicable to women. In this sense, shame can be seen as a positive value, protecting a person's honour in the public eye. According to Malina, Van der Watt and Joubert (1995: *ad loc*), the Ancient person's value and its acknowledgement was an important

blasphemous things by pretending to be the Son of God (10:33; 19:7) and that he claimed to be the king of the Jews (19:1).¹²⁴ Jesus is branded as a *deviant* who is essentially “out of place”. Malina and Neyrey (1991:100) remarks: “Behavior is deviant when it violates the sense of order or the set of classification which people perceive to structure their world.”

According to Malina and Neyrey (1991:107), a definite ritual process¹²⁵ existed, in the ancient Mediterranean context of the first century, through which someone was labelled as a *deviant*. Since this ritual causes a change in status, Malina and Neyrey call it a “status-degradation ritual”. *Status-degradation rituals categorise, label and degrade the individual's honour and social worth in the eyes of society*. Status transformation occurs at specific places and in specific contexts, like: disputes, public challenges, courts, etc. The ritual culminates in public humiliation.

The status of Jesus is dramatically transformed (from a human perspective) during his crucifixion: From truthful teacher and Rabbi to someone who

factor in life. Since Ancient Mediterranean people were group-oriented personalities and not individualistic in the modern Western sense, the group an individual belonged to was *the* paramount factor when it came to honour. The individual's good name was maintained only if the group acknowledged that individual's honour. The individual's honour and its acknowledgement was closely related to his or her conduct and how it aligns with the group's norms, values and protocol. It goes without saying that in this context it was of paramount importance for individuals to be cognisant of the group's norms and to be aware of the types of behaviour deemed acceptable by the group.

Should an individual happen to overstep the group's rules or norms, or claim honour for him- or herself not publicly acknowledged, the person was branded or labelled with tags such as blasphemer, Samaritan, fool, sinner, lunatic, etc. People with labels were branded and were by implication shameful people, without any positive status whatsoever (Malina et al. 1995: *ad loc*).

Persons or groups could acquire honour through social interaction with outsiders. For example, by challenging the good name of someone with the same social status as you by means of debates, insults, trick questions, etcetera (see forensic discussions between Jewish leaders and Jesus), a person could increase his own honour and that of the group if he could succeed in humiliating the other party publicly (Malina and Neyrey 1991:31). Malina and Neyrey (1991:99) states: “Of their nature, forensic trials are status degradation rituals, that is, part of a larger scenario of deviance processing.” In the Ancient context, when an individual was charged judicially and involved with a court case, the charge against this person was viewed in a very serious light.

124 The implicit reader, however, knows that Jesus is δικαιοσύνης (righteous) (16:10) and without sin (7:18; 8:46). These certitudes render the Jewish charges all the more doubtful, questionable and out of sync with the truth of the matter.

125 See Turner (1969) on ritual process.

preaches lies; From innocent to guilty; From pure to impure (in Jewish eyes); From whole to broken; From an honourable citizen to a shameful citizen; From respected “King of the Jews” during his entrance into Jerusalem (Joh 12) to ridiculed “King of the Jews”.

In each step of the arrest-and-conviction process, Jesus is handled with increased dishonour. On a ritual level, each step leads in increasing levels to the culminating degradation of honour and status in the context of the Jewish socio-religious system: Pilate delivers Jesus to be lashed (19:1). The soldiers weave a crown of thorns and place it on his head (19:2). They clothed him with a purple garment, repeatedly saying: “We greet you, King of the Jews!” And each time they assaulted him physically. This conduct humiliated Jesus and systematically degraded his status.

Pilate proposes that Jesus be released, since he found Jesus innocent (19:6, 12). Here, the status of Jesus, as a respected and honourable human being in societal eyes, receives a final blow. Instead of being protected against the Romans by his countrymen, his own people sell him out by shouting as one man for his crucifixion (19:6,15). In so doing, they refuse to attribute any honour to him and reject him in essence.¹²⁶

In this context, the death of Jesus can be seen as the culmination of tension in the Gospel and the culmination of the crisis situation. Malina and Neyrey (1991:107) confirm this and state: “According to the classic definition of a ritual, Jesus is set apart for trial, judgment and castigation (separation), then crucified (liminality), then put in a tomb (aggregation). The entombment marks the successful completion of the degradation ritual.” Somewhere else, Malina and Neyrey (1991:117) say: “The degradation of Jesus culminated in his crucifixion.” In terms of the three stages of the ritual process, Jesus is removed from his group, robbed of his status and placed in a position of liminality, having been stripped of his previous identity (in human eyes) and eventually killed or marginalised (See Marcus 2006:73–87).

8.4.2 *Disorientation*

If seen through the *worldly perspective of unbelievers*, the death of Jesus is the ultimate culminating marginalised reality in the Jesus-event (see the footnote treating the cross as δόξα).¹²⁷ *From an ideal position of existential potentialities*

¹²⁶ In this regard, see Cassidy (1992:40–53) for a discussion on “The Roman trial of Jesus”, where he offers an exposition of the trial of Jesus before Pontius Pilate and the systematic humiliation he endured, which ultimately led to the crucifixion.

¹²⁷ Through unbelieving human eyes, the cross is a σκάνδαλον, but through the spiritual eyes of faith, the cross becomes δόξα (glorification) and a kingly display of power. This is also

and honour at the bosom of his Father, the “inherited” status of Jesus is systematically degraded until he eventually dies and loses all existential possibilities and honour in the eyes of an unbelieving world. Malina and Neyrey (1991:117) describe it accurately: “Finally, the complete and irrevocable loss of status occurred when Jesus died.”

EXCURSUS: The death of Jesus as final Marginalising Reality

In ancient Jewish thinking, the dead were seen as unclean. They are thus seen as marginalised, not only because of the marginalisation that occurs between the dead and the group, but also because of the deconstruction of the deceased’s honour: The dead are impure in an absolute sense. Neyrey (1991:287) states: “The dead, [who] rank among the most unclean of all people...” Pilch (1991:207) similarly argues: “Similarly, people afflicted in one or another of the symbolic body zones can also be considered unwholesome or impure because of their perceived lack of symbolic bodily integrity which also points to a deficiency in purity, wholeness, holiness.” According to the map of places, the dead don’t belong in the same space as healthy people, “but in their own realm of tombs and graveyards” (Neyrey 1991:282).

As far as the world and the Jewish leaders are concerned, Jesus failed. Judged from that perspective, Jesus was unable to save himself, leaving his mission in

John’s perspective. John interprets the cross throughout as $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$. The presupposition, however, that the cross only becomes $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ in view of the resurrection, is maintained. The text explicitly indicates that Jesus’ own disciples only understood the full meaning of the cross after the resurrection (cf. 2:22). The implication of this is that, shortly after the death of Jesus, they were immersed in a temporary position of disorientation, hiding behind closed doors in fear of the Jews (cf. 20:19). Thomas’s faithlessness is well-known. Thomas did not believe that Jesus raised himself from the dead (cf. 20:25). Earlier on in the book, the inseparable bond between cross and resurrection was shown. If it can be argued that John does not theologically combine cross and resurrection, in the sense that the resurrection is theologically unnecessary, it follows that the cross is, in and of itself, *the* sign in the Gospel and could it be interpreted as being $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ without any assistance from the resurrection. However, we saw in 10:17–18 that Jesus himself inextricably combined his death on the cross and the resurrection theologically. Obviously, this is the ideological perspective of the author of John. In 10:17–18, we see that the cross was meant ($\tau\acute{o}\nu$) to ultimately cause the resurrection. Focus is drawn to the Johannine image of ‘life’, which plays a cardinal theological role in the Gospel. The discussion of the cross as $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ therefore takes place only later, under the heuristic category identified as the orientation phase. The sensitive reader is at this stage thus left in narratological tension.

impotent purification (See Dt 21:22–23). He himself, who claimed to be ‘resurrection’ and ‘life’ (11:25), allowed people to kill him. However, what they fail to recognise, is that he willingly and purposefully ‘laid down his life for his sheep’ (10:11, 17–18). Although he is the personification of eternal life (1:1–2; 11:25), and was without sin, but righteous and pure, he chooses, as the revealer of truth (1:1), to lay down his life (10:17–18) and die like a seed (12:24) for the sake of God’s plan (3:16).

As was argued above, the disciples of Jesus occupied a state of disorientation after his death. Throughout, the implicit reader is clearly aware that the disciples fail to comprehend the eschatological significance of Jesus’ message and incarnation (2:22; 12:16; 13:7; 20:9) until after the reality of his resurrection. After the death of Jesus, the disciples are depicted behind closed doors, filled with fear (20:19 τὸν φόβον τῶν Ἰουδαίων), unaware of the eschatological healing about to occur, triumphantly exceeding all expectations (cf. 20:9- οὐδέπω γὰρ ᾔδεισαν τὴν γραφὴν ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι). Thomas, one of Jesus’ own disciples, is caught up in doubt (20:25 οὐ μὴ πιστεύσω). In Thomas’s eyes, the cross is not yet δόξα, but σκάνδαλον. Of course, this is similar to our previous argument that only in the light of the resurrection, the cross becomes δόξα and the disciples enabled to see the full picture and believe the words of Jesus (cf. 2:22). Wengst (2000:113) is in other words correct when he says “Ihr will er hiermit deutlich mache, dass Jesus nur angemessen wahrgenommen werden kann unter der Perspektive seines Todes am Kreuz und des Zeugnisses, dass Gott ihn von den Toten auferweckt hat.”

8.4.3 *Agent of Transformation*

Among other things, God is described in the Gospel as the living Father (ὁ ζῶν πατήρ). This description is the author’s way of communicating God’s status as the primary source of life. God is the origin of true, eternal life (See 6:57; Schnelle 1998:134).¹²⁸ Van der Watt (2000a:121) remarks that true salvation or Life can only be found in God. Schnelle (1998:134) agrees: “Der Vater als Inbegriff des Lebens sendet den Sohn (cf. V. 29.38 f.44) zur Rettung des vom Tod gekennzeichneten Kosmos...” Weil der lebendige Gott seinen Sohn sandte, eröffnet sich für die Glaubenden das Leben. Wie der Sohn durch den Vater lebt, so wird der Glaubende durch Jesus Leben (cf. V. 33.35.48.51a).” Anyone possessing or able to share this type of life could only have received it from God (6:51–58).

128 Schnelle (1998:134) notes: “Der Vater als Inbegriff des Lebens sendet den Sohn (vgl. V. 29.38 f.44) zur Rettung des vom Tod gekennzeichneten Kosmos...” Weil der lebendige Gott seinen Sohn sandte, eröffnet sich für die Glaubenden das Leben. Wie der Sohn durch den Vater lebt, so wird der Glaubende durch Jesus Leben (vgl. V. 33.35.48.51a).”

Earlier on in the book, we saw that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Clearly, this serves as proof that Jesus has the authority to raise someone from the dead and, hence, that he was sent by God (11:42). In this context, Jesus says that those who believe in him will never die. Even if they die physically, they won't die spiritually. The quality of this 'life' that Jesus bestows, is of such nature that someone stays alive in spite of his physical death. This type of 'life' is therefore qualitatively different to life on earth. This 'life' comes from 'above', from God. Van der Watt (2000a:121) is of the opinion that whoever lives like this can raise from an earthly death, precisely because the life that God gives is qualitatively superior to the limited nature of earthly life (cf. 6:57).

Whereas Lazarus is raised with mediated assistance (from God), Jesus enters death on his own. He does this as an authoritative (10:17–18) figure who lays down his life voluntarily (Schnelle 1998:180; Wengst 2000:1.385–397). *While occupying the supposed existential state of death, he is actually still 'alive', since he takes up his own life again by resurrecting. He is, after all, the personification of resurrection and life (11:24). Even in the position of death, Jesus still maintains control over his own life.* The passive (ὅτε οὖν ἡγέρθη ἐκ νεκρῶν) is used in 2:22 to refer to the resurrection of Jesus retrospectively.¹²⁹ However, we read in 5:21 that God raises the dead (ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ἐγείρει τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ ζωοποιεῖ), but that he consigned this ability to Jesus (οὕτως καὶ ὁ υἱὸς οὗς θέλει ζωοποιεῖ) (see 5:21; 6:57). The exegetical discussion of 10:17–18 above, already argued that Jesus lays down his own life as authoritative agent with the purpose of taking it up again. Hence, Jesus is the agent of transformation who raises himself, because he is resurrection and life (11:25). These events, however, occur within the framework of the mission motif as a direction from God (10:18). According to Van der Watt (2000a:121), *an extremely important theological conception of the resurrection of Jesus is in evidence here, i.e. that God doesn't raise Jesus (as Paul puts it—cf. Rom 4:24–25; 6:4 etc.), but that Jesus himself has the power to raise from the dead. He possesses transcendental, qualitative (eternal) life, and the subsequent existential possibilities, inherently in his being. In John, Jesus himself is the agent of transformation within the sphere of the mission motif.* Precisely for this reason, the crucifixion of Jesus is not meant to petrify in impotence, but to result in life, as Wengst (2000:1.386) has it: “Damit wird auf das Geheimnis und die Gewissheit angespielt, dass der Tod Jesu nicht unglückliches Scheitern war, sondern doch zum Leben gewendet wurde” (See also Maier 1984:454–455).

129 The passive use in 2:22 indeed points, in the Johannine context, to the fact that life and resurrection ultimately has its origin in God, but this statement is particularly filled with content by the strong emphasis on the authority consigned to and possessed by Jesus, also with regard to his control over life and death (10:17–18) (Van der Watt 2000a: *ad loc*).

8.4.4 *Transformational Interaction*

John 20:1 describes how Mary Magdalene went to the grave early that Sunday morning, only to see that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. The author doesn't describe in detail how Jesus was raised from the dead. Mary eventually encounters Jesus in his "mysterious and transformed body", indicative of the fact that a divine interaction of transformation had occurred (See Kysar 1986:303). It's been explained on numerous accounts that Jesus was the transformation agent who took up his own life (cf. 10:17–18), and thus effectuated the interaction of transformation (cf. 10:17–18).

Milgrom (1991:1002) indicates that death and its associated space (place of death, graves) are strongly linked to impurity. Milgrom categorises death, blood flow, semen, and skin diseases under the heading '*death-impurities*', which were Jewish signs of mortality in the process of becoming death. For Jews, death represents that space where God is not to be found. God is God of life and death stands directly opposite to life.

In this context, Milgrom (1991:1002) points to Numbers 19:11–22,¹³⁰ which describes how to treat impurity, should an individual come into contact with a

130 Translation of Numbers 19:11 (KJV): "11 He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days. 12 He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean. 13 Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness *is* yet upon him. 14 This *is* the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that *is* in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. 15 And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, *is* unclean. 16 And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. 17 And for an unclean *person* they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: 18 And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip *it* in the water, and sprinkle *it* upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave: 19 And the clean *person* shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even. 20 But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the LORD: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he *is* unclean. 21 And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them, that he that sprinkleth the water of separation shall wash his clothes; and he that toucheth the water of separation shall be unclean until even. 22 And whatsoever the unclean *person* toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth *it* shall be unclean until even."

dead person or into contact with objects that happened to be in the presence of a dead person. Measured against Jewish purity laws, Jesus was unclean, and so was the space he occupied in the grave. In the eyes of the Jews, Jesus, as well as the state he found himself in, was not in any way to be associated with wholeness or holiness.

The interaction of transformation (i.e. the resurrection) receives a brand new meaning within the context of the Jewish social-religious system of the day. As a result of the resurrection, the traditional unholy space (a grave, defiled by death and brokenness) suddenly becomes, in the presence of the agent of transformation, holy space (where life is generated, received and restored). It is in the context of the grave, traditionally associated with death impurity and unholiness, where brand new life, purity and holiness is created.

Within the socio-religious paradigm of the day, holiness and life could only be accessed through God (Elliott 1991:223). Now, the presence of God is undeniably realised within the presence of Jesus. Jesus becomes the new temple (cf. 2:19), where God's life and holiness is to be found. In the presence of Jesus, 'light' and 'life' bursts through. According to Neyrey (1991:218), this should be the point of departure when considering Jesus' statement that the Jews are like white painted graves. The non-believing Jews are themselves like graves, impure! In their impurity, they are actually "out of place" and far from God's expectations for holiness. If we stay absolutely true to the Johannine context, the Jews are children of the devil (8:44) and spiritually dead (5:24). In their deadly existence, *they* are the ones who are impure and removed from God.

In and through the resurrection, Jesus shows that true life can only be found in him (11:25). Just as the Father has life in himself, so Jesus also has true life in himself (5:26). In and through the resurrection, Jesus not only conquered death, but also indicated that he is one with the Father and that he has the authority to give life to whom he wants (5:21). Through the resurrection, he showed that he was indeed the sent Son of God (3:17; 34; 4:34; 5:23, 24, 30, 36, 37, 38; 6:29, 38, 39, 40, 44, 57; 7:16, 18, 28, 29, 33; 8:16, 18, 26, 29, 42, 9:4; 10:36; 11:42; 12:44, 45; 13:16, 20; 14:24; 15:21; 16:5; 17:3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25; 20:21). The reality of the resurrection illustrates that he not only has the authority to give life, but that his words were true and that he truly was the sent Son of God, who came to bring life (20:30–31). By conquering death, the final marginalising reality, Jesus conquered all marginalising realities one could conceive of. When Jesus takes up his life again and conquers death, he doesn't just heal or restore his own brokenness. Jesus receives the authority to effectuate healing, restoration and reconciliation beyond all borders (or maps) separating persons, places, time and objects. Jesus is the Son of God, who can create and maintain life throughout eternity (14:1–3). In this sense, the resurrection is proof that Jesus can heal

and create (eternal) life. Thus, the resurrection is God's culminating holistic act of healing through his Son.

According to Van der Watt (2000a: *ad loc*; See Reinhartz 2001), on the level of the Universal Divine Narrative, Jesus, as sent Son of God, has to depart to his Father after the successful completion of his mission directive (7:33- ὑπάγω πρὸς τὸν πέμψαντά με).¹³¹ Just before his death on the cross, Jesus said (19:30): Τετέλεσται,—It is finished! Jesus' mission was completed successfully (17:4), which enabled him to return as agent to whence he came from and prepare space for believers (14:1–3; See Haenchen 1980:474–475).¹³² But before departing, he first returns to his loved ones (20:19v), who now see that he is indeed alive (Schnelle 1998:304–305). This follows the typical pattern of the healing acts. If the process of restoration or repair was successful, it became possible for the individual to return to a new position of existential potentialities. After all, Jesus is totally repaired and healed.¹³³ Haenchen (1980:474–475) states:

131 See above the full description of the mission of Jesus. Reinhartz (2001), in her third chapter, describes how you can identify three narrative lines that constantly overlap in the Gospel according to John, i.e. the story of Jesus, the story of the world and the story of the community. She further understands these stories as the "historical," "cosmological," and "ecclesiological" narratives in John. Reinhartz challenges the conventional two-level interpretation (the Story of Jesus and the Story of exclusion from the Synagogue) of John, as understood by Martyn (*History and Theology of the Fourth Gospel*) and Brown (*Community of the Beloved Disciple*). In the process, she claims that the ban from the Synagogues "may have provided the Johannine community not with a direct reflection of their historical experience but rather with a divinely ordained etiology *in the time of Jesus* for a situation of separation [not expulsion] which was part of their own experience" (Reinhartz 2001:50). In the follow-up chapters, she discusses certain reader responses (compliant, resistant, sympathetic and engaged) and argues that a dualistic (us-them) read of John led to conflict between and mutual exclusion of Christians and Jews. She urges for an "engaging" read of the text by regarding the "exclusivist" beloved disciple not only with sympathy, but also as "meaningful other".

132 Cf. Painter (1993:330), who thinks that Jesus, unlike Moses, moves from above to beneath and only then, returns to God. He says: "The Son of Man is the one from above, from heaven. This is the central controversy with Jewish opponents. In 3:13 the ascent (ἀναβέβηκεν) and descent (καταβάς) of the Son of Man are spoken of and 6.62 uses the same term to describe the ascent (ἀναβαίνοντα), now viewed prospectively rather than in retrospect."

133 Schnelle (1998:306–307), in his discussion of Jesus' appearance among his disciples, and specifically the confession of Thomas, puts far too little emphasis on the nature of Jesus' restoration or repair. Wengst (2001:2.299) argues: "Er sieht den Gekreuzigten und erkennt in dessen Lebendigkeit den schöpferisch handelnden Gott. Noch einmal sei betont: Thomas spricht sein Bekenntnis gegenüber einem aus, der hingerichtet worden ist. Daran ist schon früh auch innerhalb der Kirche Anstoss genommen worden. Jesus habe nur

“Wenn Jesus den Seinen bei Gott die Heimat bereitet hat, kommt er wieder und nimmst sie zu sich, damit sie wieder ihm bei Gott vereinigt sind.”

8.4.5 *Reorientation*

As already argued above, the Jesus-event can be interpreted in one of two ways, namely (cf. Van der Watt 2000a:103–105):

- 1) The death and resurrection of Jesus can be seen through the unbelieving eyes of humanity (disorientation), or
- 2) Through the spiritual eyes of faith (reorientation) (cf. 3:6).

Through *unbelieving eyes of humanity*, it would seem as if with the crucifixion of Jesus, the sense and meaning behind the ‘life’ of Jesus, completely petrifies in impotence.¹³⁴ The key to the ‘correct’ way of looking at the Christ-events is, according to Jesus in John, to be found in and through the reality of spiritual rebirth (cf. 3:5 and 3:7). Wengst (2000:1.120) agrees: “Wer nicht von oben her neu geboren wird, kann das Reich Gottes nicht sehen”. He continues and argues that it ultimately revolves around “Werden eines neuen Menschen, der durch seine Geburt eine neue Herkunft erhält” (Wengst 2000:1.121). Only then will God’s family members, when they look up at the cross, be able to see it as a source of ‘healing’ and of ‘life’, much as when Moses, during a time of crisis (disorientation) elevated a snake on a pole (cf. Num 21:4–9) and the victims looking up at the snake, received healing and life (3:14–15; Gnlika 1983:28–29).

With style and finesse, John places the death of Jesus within the context of *δόξα*, or glorification, in light of the resurrection (Gnlika 1983:29; Wengst 2000:1.132–133). In so doing, he creates an interesting twist and surprises the reader with new insight. From a situation of disorientation, the profane reality is transformed when Jesus rises from death to life. As such, the death of Jesus is finally stamped as *δόξα* and not to be seen as a profane failure, but a sacral, existentially-transformative, symbolic reality of victory (Schnackenburg

‘scheinbar’ (*dokeo*) gelitten und sei nur ‘scheinbar’ am Kreuz gestorben. Diese ‘Doketen’ sind zuerst in den Briefen des Ignatius von Antiochien zu erkennen (IgnTrall 9f; IgnSam 1–4) und wurden im Laufe der Zeit als Ketzer ausgeschlossen.”

134 Guthrie (1979:238) claims: “A Distinction between natural and spiritual birth which focuses attention on one of the major antitheses of this Gospel. Our Lord’s teaching is frequently misunderstood because its spiritual character has not been apprehended. The Mission of Jesus must be spiritually interpreted.” Barrett (1978:206) also argues that a supernatural death plays an important role in John and that it has to do with the renewal of the total human being and that “The experience cannot be communicated in rational terms...” (Barrett 1978:207).

1965:1.409).¹³⁵ In the process, the resurrection-metaphor becomes a symbolic source of hope and a witness to the liberating truth of Jesus' ability to create life from death, because he himself is the source of life (Jn 1:4; 11:25; See Barrett 1978:395–396; Carson 1991:412; Gnllka 1983:14; Schnelle 1998:34).

The foregoing embraces what Brueggemann describes as the typical "impossibility" structure, according to which the "conventional definitions of reality do not contain or define what God will yet do in Israel" (1995:xvii). In John, Jesus repeatedly breaks through the conventional structures of the day, which inhibits existential potentialities, by showcasing that Jesus truly is the real source of qualitative life (and its subsequent existential potentialities) (Barrett 1978:395–396; Köstenberger 2004:31). The resurrection is the culminating act of healing and the sign of "God's impossibilities that shatter every contained view of reality" (Brueggemann 1995:xvii).

135 Schnackenburg (1965:1.409) argues: "Wenn der Evangelist die Kreuzigung Jesu nach diesem Typus als heilsbringende 'Erhöhung' betrachtet, die zugleich zur; 'Verherrlichung' des 'Menschensohnes' wird (vgl. 8, 28; 12, 34 mit 12, 23; 13, 31), so vollzieht er damit einen christologisch höchst bedeutsamen Schritt. Den in der vorausliegenden urchristlichen Theologie folgt dem Tiefpunkt der Kreuzigung erst nachträglich die 'Erhöhung', die zur Herrschaftseinsetzung zur Rechten Gottes führt (vgl. Apg 2, 33–36l 5, 30f; Phil 2, 8–11); Joh aber begreift bereits das Kreuz als 'Erhöhung', als Beginn der Heilsherrschaft Christi (cf. das zweimalige $\nu\upsilon\nu$ in 12, 31 und das $\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\rho\iota\tau\alpha\iota$ in 16, 11), als 'Verherrlichung' durch den Vater, sie sich in der Macht zur Lebensspendung an alle ihm Gehörigen manifestiert (vgl. 17, 1f). Von einem in Leiden und Tod gehenden (und damit 'erniedrigten') 'Menschensohn' wie die Syn spricht er nicht mehr; für ihn ist das paulinische 'Ärgernis' des Kreuzes nicht erst durch die folgende Auferstehung, sondern schon durch die Hoheit und Heilsmacht des Kreuzes selbst überwunden. Die vom Vater festgesetzte 'Stunde' seines Todes (vgl. 7, 30; 8, 20), auf die sich sein Blick konzentriert (vgl. 12, 23; 13, 1; 17, 1), ist—anders als bei den Syn (vgl. Mk 14, 41; Luk 22, 53)—höchstens äusserlich noch die Stunde der Finsternis (vgl. 13, 30) und der Verwirrung (12, 27), in Wirklichkeit aber die Stunde des Hinübergangs aus dieser Welt zum Vater (13, 1) und die Stunde der Verherrlichung (12, 23; 17, 1)." We can agree with Schnackenburg (1965:1.409) that John's doesn't present the crucifixion of Jesus as humiliation (*Ärgernis*), but in my view John is only able to see the cross as *Verherrlichung* because he looks at it from the reality of the resurrection. The theological unity of the cross and resurrection is indicated above (cf. 2:18–22; and especially 10:17–18), where we saw that God loves the Son because he obeys his command—a command which contains both the laying down and the *taking up* of his life. In my opinion, the resurrection is not only the culminating sign in the Gospel, but also the *seminal* sign. *With seminal sign I mean the culminating semeia upon which everything is built, and which provides the framework against which all other signs are to be interpreted. This doesn't take away that the crucifixion of Jesus was, in a Johannine context, a crisis, humiliation and sacrifice. However, humiliation is not the focus, but the victory of resurrection and life which flows from it and stands in the centre.*

According to Van der Watt (2000a:3), the question regarding the identity of Jesus is commonly acknowledged by researchers to be a central structural moment in the Gospel. The question about the identity of Jesus leads to the development and elaboration of Christology. The implicit reader is constantly confronted with a question: Who is Jesus for you? (See Schnackenburg 1990:3.331–332). It is also the author's goal (20:30–31) to guide the reader in such a way that he or she eventually confesses with Thomas that Jesus truly is “ὁ κύριός καὶ ὁ θεός” (cf. 20:28) (Carson 1991:659; Morris 1995:753; Ridderbos 1997:647–648). Thomas, and those who believe that Jesus is the resurrected Son of God, reconstruct the status of Jesus. For all practical purposes, Jesus continues living as long as they acknowledge and confess this (Guthrie 1970:238). Jesus comes to life if people reconstruct his status, if they believe that he is the resurrected Son of God, who has authority over life and death (See Wengst 2001:2.299). On the other hand, there are those who don't believe that Jesus is alive. They don't reconstruct his status. For them, Jesus is dead. Neither Jesus, nor his followers possess any viable existential potentialities. For them, the potentiality of the Jesus-movement is dead; it has petrified in impotence.

The significance of the cross and death of Jesus is *radically reoriented* in John and serves as revelatory proof that God, the Father, is himself present at the missionary conduct of Jesus (Van der Watt 2000a; cf. 8:29 -καὶ ὁ πέμψας με μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐστίν· οὐκ ἀφῆκέν με μόνον; Ridderbos 1997:304; Morris 1995:402).¹³⁶ Jesus truly is the sent Revealer (cf. 1:1 -ὁ λόγος; 1:18 -εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο), who originates from God (See Haenchen 1980:151). God is with Jesus (8:16, 29; 16:32), He is in Jesus, he is one with Jesus (10:30-ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἓν ἐσμεν; cf. 17:21)—this becomes obvious on the cross! Schnackenburg (1971:257–258) is thus correct when he states:

Desgleichen aber ist Jesus überzeugt, dass, wie er selbst nur gehorsam den Willen des Vaters ausführt, ihn auch dieser nicht im Stiche lässt. Der Satz, in dem noch einmal die untrennliche Verbundenheit des Gesandten mit dem Sendenden aufklingt (vgl. zu 8, 16 und 18), steht noch im Blickkreis der “Erhöhung”. Die Menschen werden ihn wegen seines Zeugnisses für Gott ans Kreuz bringen; aber, von den Menschen verlassen, wird er vom Vater nicht verlassen sein (vgl. 16, 32).

SCHNACKENBURG 1971:257–258

136 Compare 17:21—ἵνα πάντες ἔν ὧσιν, καθὼς σύ, πάτερ, ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ ἐν σοί, ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἡμῖν ὦσιν, ἵνα ὁ κόσμος πιστεύῃ ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας.

As such, the cross becomes, in view of the resurrection, the primary *sphere of revelation* with regard to both the relationship between Father and Son and the truth behind the totality of Jesus' revelatory conduct (cf. 3:14;¹³⁷ 8:28; 12:32).¹³⁸ Therefore, it is only through the reorientation-perspective of cross and resurrection that the totality of Jesus' earthly conduct, as well as the significance thereof, comes to the fore in its full splendour (2:22; 12:16; 13:7; 20:9). This perspective is illuminated by the fact that the disciples of Jesus themselves, struggled to comprehend everything during the life and work of Jesus (cf. 2:22; 7:37–39; 12:16; 13:7; 20:9; See Davies 1992; Carson 1991:463).¹³⁹ Only in retrospect, in *light* of the resurrection and outpouring of the Spirit (20:22), the disciples were enabled to comprehend the cross as δόξα (Van der Watt 2000a: *ad loc*; See also Morris 1995:180).¹⁴⁰ In other words, it is only *after* completion of both crucifixion *and* resurrection, that reorientation could occur and that the disciples (and the world) could believe that Jesus was the sent Son of God, thereby being enabled to receive eternal life (cf. 5:24; 6:47; 17:3; 20:30–31; See Carson 1991:183, 661; Barrett 1978:201, 503).¹⁴¹ Schnackenburg (1971:367) agrees with this and indicates that: “Der Evangelist selbst sagt, dass dieser Sinn des Wortes Jesu den Jüngern erst nach der Auferstehung ihres Herrn aufgegangen ist.” The sting of the cross and of death is destroyed only after the interaction of transformation (i.e. the resurrection), which made it possible to present the fearsome

137 Compare 3:14–15—Καὶ καθὼς Μωϋσῆς ὑψώσεν τὸν ὄφιν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, οὕτως ὑψωθήναι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐν αὐτῷ ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

138 Bultmann (1984) and Forestell (1974) both interpret the central meaning of the death of Jesus as part of his conduct of revelation. It is obvious in John that the true meaning behind the death of Jesus will become increasingly clear (Ridderbos 1997:303).

139 See Culpepper (1983:161–162) for the misunderstandings in John: 2:19–21; 3:3–5; 4:10–15, 31–34; 6:32–35, 51–53; 7:33–36; 8:21–22, 31–35, 51–53, 56–58; 11:11–15, 23–25; 12:32–34; 13:36–38; 14:4–6, 7–9; 16:16–19.

140 Brown (1984:1036) argues that the events surrounding the Holy Spirit in 20:22 represent a climax in terms of the post-resurrection occurrences and is anticipated and prepared in a variety of ways earlier on in the chapter. He conjectures that both the association between the resurrection and the ascension in 20:17, as well as the fact that people become children of God when Jesus returns to the Father, alludes to the work of the Holy Spirit. Brown (1984:1037; See also 949–951) goes as far as arguing that the references to water and blood flowing from Jesus' side symbolises the Spirit. For Brown (1984:1037), the action of Jesus in 20:22 echoes the LXX of Genesis 2:7, where God blows life into Adam, as expressed by the word ἐνεφύσησεν.

141 According to Jewish-Hellenistic thought (cf. Wis 15:3), the knowledge of the “Only true God” is connected to salvation. See also Philo (*Spec. Laws* 1.60 § 332). See also 3 Macc 6:18 μεγαλόδοτος παντοκράτωρ καὶ ἀληθινὸς θεός.

crucifixion as a kingly display of power. (See Haenchen 1980:203).¹⁴² Bultmann (1995:314) is correct when he states:

Death is a terrible thing that makes *zōē* improper, and the work of Christ is that of destroying death (2 Tim 1:10). Death is the last enemy; with its overthrow salvation will be complete (1 Cor 15:26; Rev 20:14). Christ's death and resurrection are the eschatological event by which death itself is destroyed (2 Tim 1:10; Heb 2:14). Christ's death is unique. It is not a death to sin; God made him sin for us (2 Cor 5:21; Rom 8:3; Gal 3:13–14), and he died for us. In him God deals with us, takes death to himself, and thus makes it a creative divine act. This removes sin and death, and from it life springs, for Christ is not held by death (Acts 2:24), comes to life again (Rom 8:34), and now has the keys of death and Hades (Rev 1:18). Giving his life, he takes it again (Jn 10:18). Humbling himself, he is divinely exalted (Phil 2:6ff.). He thus overcomes death for those who make his death their own in faith. He is the firstborn from the dead (Col 1:18; Rev 1:5). Believers still die, except for those alive at Christ's coming (1 Th 4:15ff.). But they will finally overcome death at the resurrection (1 Cor 15:26; Rev 21:4), so that even now death has lost its sting (1 Cor 15:55). As impending death negates life for unbelievers, awaited resurrection gives it a new character for believers. They will not die (Jn 6:50). They have passed from death to life (5:24).

BULTMANN 1995:314

8.4.6 *Realising Existential Potentialities*

The *eschatological era of the Spirit*,¹⁴³ which coheres undeniably with the presence of God, commences with the cross-event (Van der Watt 2000a: *ad loc*).¹⁴⁴

142 Carson (1991:661) and others like Beasley-Murray (1999:387) are of the opinion that the death, resurrection and appearances of Jesus should also be seen as *σημεία*. Haenchen (1980:203) states: "Erst nach der Auferstehung Jesu haben seine Jünger den Sinn seines rätselhaften Wortes 2, 16 erfasst und diesem Wort daraufhin Glauben schenkt (der Glaube trägt sein Verstehen in sich)."

143 In 7:39, the flow of water streams is connected to the eschatological presence of the Spirit, which became a reality in the Jesus-event.

144 As such, the presence of God amongst his people drastically changes with the resurrection of Jesus. No longer will God be worshipped at the Temple in Jerusalem or on the mountain of the Samaritans (4:21–24—λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· πιστεuέ μοι, γύναι, ὅτι ἐρχεται ὥρα ὅτε οὔτε ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ οὔτε ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις προσκυνήσετε τῷ πατρὶ), but access to God will be achieved through the pneumatological presence of the resurrected Lord (2:18–22; 14:18–20). Clearly, the gift of the Spirit is also a climax in the passion narrative

Naturally, this gift of the Spirit has to be read against the Old Testament expectation of a *life-bringing presence of the Spirit* in the eschatological end time, especially against the background of the Ezekiel pronouncements, as indicated above. See Ridderbos 1997:276–277; cf. 7:37–39).¹⁴⁵ Wilckens (1998:135) states:

Auch dies hat atl. Hintergrund: Nach Jes 44,3 und Ez 36,25ff. wird das Wasser der endzeitlichen Tempelquelle reinigende Wirkung haben kraft des Geistes, den Gott auf die Heilsgemeinde der Endzeit aussessien wird. Das Gleiche wird in Sach 14,8 verheissen: ‘An jenem Tage wird lebendiges Wasser aus Jerusalem herausfliessen’. Dieser Stelle entspricht Joh 7,38 im Wortlaut so deutlich, dass die Annahme sehr wahrscheinlich ist, dass Sach 14,8 zusammen mit Ps 78,15 im Blick steht.

WILCKENS 1998:135

In the gift of the Spirit through Jesus, it is God himself who fulfils his prophetic promises (Van der Watt 2000a: *ad loc*; See Davies 1992:201–202; Guthrie 1970:237; Köstenberger 2004:240).¹⁴⁶ In John 20:22, we read: “²²καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς·λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον.”¹⁴⁷ Most scholars agree that “ἐνεφύσησεν”

itself (Brown 1984:1039). With the announcement of eschatological peace, Jesus blows over the disciples and gives them the Holy Spirit (20:22). With that, God’s presence in the Jesus-event is unmistakably affirmed. The aforementioned claim is also confirmed when Jesus sends and consigns authority to his disciples within the salvation plan of God (20:21–23).

145 Here, we can think of Ezk 11:19; 18:31–32; 36:26–27; 37:1vv.; See Jes 12:3 for texts associated with the Tabernacle Feast (cf. also Zch 14:16–17). Köstenberger (2004:240), with reference to Tabernacle Feast, states: “This festival seems to speak of the joyful restoration of Israel and the ingathering of the nation. Here Jesus presents himself as God’s agent to make these end-time events a reality.”

146 Guthrie (1970:237) argues that Hellenistic influences in the Gospel of John can’t be denied, but that the Jewish context against which it should be read, plays a vital role, since the identity of Jesus stands in a direct relationship to Old Testament expectations: “He charged His hearers with searching Scripture and yet not recognizing that it testified to Him.” In terms of the cross-event, Guthrie (1970:237) states that: “John alone records that at the crucifixion Jesus’ legs were not broken, as a fulfillment of Scripture, and in this case the inviolability of Scripture is partially stressed (xix. 36).” In 8:56, the connection between Jesus and Moses is made, and put in such a way that the plan of God with his people ultimately had to culminate in the Jesus-event. Because of this, it is clear that: “Nothing could express more clearly that there was a direct continuity between the Old and the New” (Guthrie 1970:238).

147 Translation: “²² And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost”.

most probably has a connection with Genesis 2:7 (Brown 1984:1037), where God blows breath or 'life' into a 'dead' Adam with the might of his ability to create (cf. LXX: ἐνεφύσησεν); as well as Ezekiel 37:9 (cf. LXX: ἐνεφύσησεν), where God blows new life into dead (dry) bones (Köstenberger 2004:574; Morris 1995:747; Barrett 1978:570; Brown 1970:1035–1037).

God promises his Spirit in that context (Ezk 37:14), a Spirit that will bring to life a dead and decayed nation, thereby offering them hope, expectation as well as new existential potentialities (Ezk 37:11).¹⁴⁸

He will also unify a scattered nation in the Promised Land (Ezk 37:21). He will purify them from their impurity¹⁴⁹ (Ezk 37:23) and set them apart (Ezk 37:27–28).¹⁵⁰ Wengst (2001:2.292; as well as Haenchen 1980:572)¹⁵¹ agrees and states:

Die Formulierung vom Anhauchen erinnert an Gen 2,7, wo es von Gott im Blick auf den von ihm gebildeten Erdenkloss Adam heisst: ... und er hauchte in seine Nase Lebensodem. Da wurde Adam zum lebendigen Wesen. Nach Ez 37,9 soll der Prophet den Geist(wind) auffordern: ‚Komm von dem vier Winden, Geist(wind), und hauchte diese Erschlagenen an,

148 In other words, Lindars (1972:611) is correct when he states in reference to John 20:22: "With this symbolic action Jesus fulfills the expectation of 1.33 and the promise of the Paraclete (cf. also 7.39) ... This suggests that John sees the constitution of the Church after the Resurrection as a kind of 'new creation'."

149 Milgrom (1991:1005) points to the doctrine of the priestly H-source in Ezekiel, which believes that impurity, can be transferred from the people onto both the Promised Land and the sanctuary. This explains the strong focus on the holiness and purity of Israel (cf. Ezk 18:24–30; 20:22–24; 22:24).

150 Novakovic (2003), in her study of Matthew, indicates that, according to her, it was not commonplace to expect miracles and healing from the Davidic Messiah. She argues: "Even though it is a well-known axiom that the Davidic Messiah was expected neither to do miracles nor to be a healer, Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew is addressed with the messianic title 'Son of David' almost exclusively within the context of his healing activity." Novakovic (2003:131) further argues that *Pss. Sol.* 17:38–40 utilises the image of the 'good' shepherd in a context where the expected Son of David is contemplated. This shepherd will not allow one of his sheep to get lost. Novakovic (2003:131) is of the opinion that the shepherd image was developed from Ezekiel 34:23–24, where the ideal Davidic king is described. In direct opposition to other kings (shepherds) in Israel, who receive sharp criticism in Ezekiel 34:2–4, this king is described as a good shepherd.

151 Haenchen (1980:572) also affirms this: "Wie einst Gott in der Schöpfungsgeschichte (Gen 2,7) dem Menschen seinen Geist eingehaucht hat, so nun Jesus mit den Worten: 'Empfanget den heiligen Geist!'"

dass sie leben.' Das wird hier zum Bild für den neuen Exodus aus dem Exil in Babel als neue Schöpfung.

WENGST 2001:2.292

The themes of *new life* and *recreation* (*neue Schöpfung*) or the realisation of lost *existential potentialities* are, in this context, squarely on the foreground (Keener 2003:1204; Köstenberger 2004:575; Witherington 1995:342). Not only does Jesus restore his own brokenness by creating new life, but he also 'blows' or bestows this life, with its associated potentialities, onto the disciples and, ultimately, (a believing) mankind. Wengst (2001:2.292–293) argues that "Gabe des Geistes und sündenvergebung sowie neue Schöpfung und Sündenvergebung sind schon traditionell miteinander verbunden." Even in the context of Ezekiel 36:25–27, it centres on the forgiveness of sins and the restoration or recreation that follows. In 2 Chronicles 7:14,¹⁵² conversion (LXX—ἐντραπή), the forgiveness of sins (LXX—ἀμαρτίας) and restoration or healing (LXX—ιάσμαι) are explicitly combined with each other (See Ps 51:3–15). Rusam (2005:69) states that the context of "Ἰδε ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἀμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου" (1:29) is about: "Der κόσμος ist hier nicht das Objekt des Heilshandelns, sondern es geht um *die* Sünde der Welt. Und diese ist eben Unglaube." The coming and death of Jesus, therefore, has to do with the possibilities of forgiveness, restoration, recreation and life for a world drenched in faithlessness, sin, death, blindness and spiritual brokenness (cf. 1:12, 5:24, 12:40).

The type of 'life', and subsequent existential potentialities, Jesus brought, are qualitatively better than any earthly life and repeatedly evade all materialistic (earthly) borders. The reason is that this type of life is divine and originates within the sphere of God. By placing this life into creation categories (1:1,4), John succeeds in embedding it in a superior hierarchical structure, making this type of life superior to the quality of life we find on earth (cf. Van der Watt 2000a: *ad loc*). In 14:1–3, Jesus remarks that he returns to his Father to prepare a place for believers in his Father's house (Morris 1995:567; Ridderbos 1997:490). This points toward new existential possibilities in the presence of the Father and the Son (Köstenberger 2004:426–427).

What is also true, is that this heavenly life repeatedly 'incarnates' here on earth in a materialistic form. In this way, heavenly life is hauled into an earthly reality. Whenever an interaction occurs between a heavenly life and a broken

152 The LXX version of 2 Chronicles 7:14 reads: "⁴καὶ ἐὰν ἐντραπή ὁ λαός μου, ἐφ' οὓς τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπικέκληται ἐπ' αὐτούς, καὶ προσεύξωνται καὶ ζητήσωσιν τὸ πρόσωπόν μου καὶ ἀποστρέψωσιν ἀπὸ τῶν ὁδῶν αὐτῶν τῶν πονηρῶν, καὶ ἐγὼ εἰσακούσομαι ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἴλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις αὐτῶν καὶ ἰάσομαι τὴν γῆν αὐτῶν.

earthly life, the earthly reality is transformed. As such, the broken reality, with its lack of existential potentialities, is restored to include new existential possibilities and meaningful reorientation.¹⁵³ We have to do, here, with what Brueggemann calls the “restorative hermeneutic of representation” (1995:22). Not only is the broken situation restored, but the disorientation and loss of existential potentialities that go with it, is transformed into a situation of surprise, newness, relocation, reorientation and a fresh ‘representation’ of new existential potentialities. The incarnation of Jesus gave rise to a giant magnetic field in the world and people are positioned on either the positive or the negative pole thereof¹⁵⁴ (Hays 1996:149; See Guthrie 1970:238¹⁵⁵).¹⁵⁶ During an interaction of transformation, or meeting with Jesus, judgment already takes place—*believers* are separated from *non-believers*.¹⁵⁷ Those who believe are “enlightened” and have already moved across from a deadly existence to a lively state of being (cf. 5:24).¹⁵⁸ Those who faithlessly reject Jesus are *spiritually*

153 Although this new life is qualitatively eternal, it realises in the present and has implications for the believer's life of inter-relationships on ground level. Schnackenburg (1980:361) states: “The Johannine idea of life has no direct connection with life in society or the future of the human race. Nevertheless . . . the individual striving for ‘eternal life’ is directed towards the community of brethren and the practice of brotherly love as a necessary condition for reaching the goal.”

154 Barrett (1978:392) says: “So in John, the light by which men walk, in the absence of which they stumble, is Christ, who, simply by being the light of the world, distinguishes between the children of light and the children of darkness.” (cf. 3:19–21).

155 Guthrie (1970:238) states: “There is more of our Lord's teaching about the Spirit in this Gospel than in any other. In the Nicodemus discourse, the work of the Spirit in regeneration is clearly brought out (Jn 3). A distinction between natural and spiritual birth which focuses attention on one of the major antitheses of this Gospel. Our Lord's teaching is frequently misunderstood because its spiritual character has not been apprehended. The Mission of Jesus must be spiritually interpreted.”

156 Schnackenburg (1980:255) agrees with Hays: “This judgment leads to a division among people, and this factor is present here as in 3:19.”

157 See Bultmann (1955:38).

158 Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:196) are right in saying: “The theme of light and darkness, day and night (vv. 9–10), replicates the larger concern about life and death in this chapter.” Köstenberger (2004:188–189), in his discussion of 5:24, indicates that those who hear must believe, but doesn't make enough of the existential state of the “death” non-believers occupy and believers' consequent move toward ‘life’.

blind (9:39–41) and occupy an *existential state of death and spiritual brokenness* (12:40), having already been judged (9:39)¹⁵⁹ (Hays 1996:150).¹⁶⁰

Those who don't believe in Jesus and fail to reconstruct his status, walk in 'darkness' and have already been judged (12:47–49). They hate the children of God (15:18–25). They are eternally caught up in a deadly existential state (5:24), lacking (eternal) existential possibilities within God's family. They are children of the devil (8:44), who are faced with God's wrath (3:36) and who have no part in God's family. They are spiritually blind and in need of healing (12:40):

τετύφλωκεν αὐτῶν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς
καὶ ἐπώρωσεν αὐτῶν τὴν καρδίαν,
ἵνα μὴ ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς
καὶ νοήσωσιν τῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ στραφῶσιν,
καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς.

Those who believe in and act upon (στραφῶσιν) the words of Jesus, already possess eternal life—they have already moved across from death to life (5:24—μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν; cf. 6:47) and received healing (12:40—ἰάσομαι).¹⁶¹ They occupy a qualitative existential state of life and its consequent existential possibilities within God's family (1:12—τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι). The resurrection, as a culminating act of healing, serves as *the* sign of the identity of Jesus. Jesus is the source of life (1:4; 11:25)—and those who believe it have eternal life (3:16; 20:30–31). Put differently, it can be argued that the resurrection is *the* σημεῖα, which not only leads to the outpouring of the Spirit (7:37–39; 20:22), but also to life for humanity (17:2–3).

The Old Testament itself uses the terms “sickness” and “healing” to refer to Israel's crisis situation, which is more often than not linked with disobedience

159 Schnackenburg (1980:255) says: If anyone rejects the one sent by God, their unbelief becomes a judgement on them through their own guilt (3:18b; 12:48).” This, however, does not contradict God's love and justice towards the world (cf. 3:17; 8:15; 12:42).

160 Schnackenburg (1980:255) says: “The man born blind has not just received the sight of his eyes, but sight in his believing heart, and those who outwardly see; in reality they are blind and are losing their ability to perceive spiritual and divine realities.”

161 In 20:29, Jesus says to Thomas that those who believe in him, without seeing, are blessed (20:29): “Ὅτι ἑώρακάς με πεπίστευκας; μακάριοι οἱ μὴ ἰδόντες καὶ πιστεύσαντες. The ones who believe without seeing are those who reconstruct the reality of Jesus as the source and creator of life (20:30–31) in their lives. It is they who, in a certain sense, “make Jesus alive” and consequently experience the existential possibilities within the family of God (cf. 5:24–29; 3:16; 17:3). For those who don't believe, Jesus is dead and his mission hit a dead end, bringing to an end all life-creating abilities.

to God (cf. also 2 Chr 7:14; Jer 6:14; 8:11–12; 30:17; Hos 6:1). In Ezekiel 34:1v, Israel is depicted as a weak, sick, broken and lost nation. The leaders of Israel, those who were supposed to be good shepherds, only looked after their own interests. They did not help the weak, nursed the sick or attended to the wounded. They did not bring back those who were driven away, or searched for those who were lost (Ezk 34:4). The bad shepherd-leaders of Israel are depicted as cruel rulers (34:4), who left their sheep to the mercy of beasts (Ezk 34:5). The good shepherd is thus depicted as a leader who will help the weak, heal the sick and tend to the wounded (Novakovic 2003:131). Ultimately, the Messiah will himself carry the suffering and pain of the nation (cf. Is 53:4–5).¹⁶² Seybold¹⁶³ and Müller (1978:63) states: “Fürwahr, unsere Krankheiten hat er getragen und unsere Schmerzen auf sich geladen; die Strafe lag auf ihm zu unserem Heil, und durch seine Wunden sind wir geheilt (Jes 53:4).”¹⁶⁴ Novakovic (2003:131) convincingly argues that the metaphorical use of the categories ‘sickness’ and ‘healing’ is not alien to Old Testament descriptions of the Messiah or the end time. For example, compare Isaiah 53:4–5¹⁶⁵

162 Seybold and Müller (1978:122) agree and note: “Alles, was Gott in dieser Welt geschlagen hat, wird er einst wieder heilen.”

163 Cf. also Seybold (1973).

164 In 12:37–38, John quotes Is 53 but doesn’t develop the theology of the passage further, like Matthew (cf. Mt 8:17). In Old Testament thought (cf. Psalms), pain and suffering were directly related to sin and God’s punishment thereof. Isaiah presents the servant as someone who is one with our suffering and pain—in traditional terms: someone who must be a sinner and deserves to be punished, beaten and tortured by God. Especially in Psalms, we see how suffering and pain is described as being beaten, which is directly related to sin and the consequent punishment by God. But then Is 53:5 explains that it wasn’t his own transgressions that led to his punishment. The punishment he endured was a direct result of the fact that he took our transgressions upon himself (Is 53:4), he carried our ailments—those ailments which are the result of sin. We didn’t experience the sickness and suffering (i.e. punishment) which, eventually, had to lead to peace, but he did. It is through his wounds that healing and peace with God is effectuated for us (See Kutsch 1967). Thus, the OT person would not have seen suffering as something good from God. Suffering and sickness is God’s punishment for sin. The New Testament sees it differently, however. Sickness and suffering is taken up in self-sacrificing terms. A believer is depicted as someone who must suffer for Christ’s sake. It is interesting that the Schuld-Strafe-Leiden-Tod categories (See Seybold and Müller 1978:63) are no longer linked only to sin, but also to disobedience. In the representative post-Easter Christianity, suffering for the sake of Christ is interpreted as obedience (cf. Jn 16:1–2; See also 1 Pt 2:22–25).

165 Translation of Isaiah 53:4–5 (KJV): “⁴ Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was wounded

οὗτος τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν φέρει καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται, καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐλογισάμεθα αὐτὸν εἶναι ἐν πόνῳ καὶ ἐν πληγῇ καὶ ἐν κακώσει. ⁵ αὐτὸς δὲ ἐτραυματίσθη διὰ τὰς ἀνομίας ἡμῶν καὶ μεμαλάκισται διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν, παιδεῖα εἰρήνης ἡμῶν ἐπ' αὐτόν, τῷ μώλωπι αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς ἰάθημεν.

In Israelitic thought, we can see how easy it was to interpret the death and resurrection of Jesus as part of the metaphorical category of healing, since it would eventually bring about the 'healing' of spiritual blindness and disobedience (cf. Green et al. 1992:81).¹⁶⁶

The resurrection, as a culminating act of healing, serves in the Gospel as *the* sign of Jesus' true identity. The cross-event (crucifixion and resurrection) can, in other words, be viewed as an act of healing, since it connects directly to the created possibility for faith in Jesus, the healing of spiritual blindness and the salvation out of a spiritual state of dark and deadly existence (cf. 5:24).

John 3:14–16 puts it clearly that “Καὶ καθὼς Μωϋσῆς ὕψωσεν τὸν ὄφιν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, οὕτως ὑψωθῆναι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐν αὐτῷ ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον.” Thus, the cross-event is inseparably connected to the mission of the Son, his commission (cf. 10:17–18) and the gift of eternal life. Without the cross-event, the possibilities of eternal life, healing and the existential potentialities that flow from it, would not have existed (See Schnackenburg 1990:1.394–400). Pictorially speaking, the cross-event inseparably ties up with the salvation of humanity from an existential state of 'darkness' (cf. 8:12; 12:35, 46), death (5:24) and 'lost-ness' (3:16) by illustrating that Jesus truly is the

for our transgressions, *he* was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

166 Green et al. (1992:81) note (quoted here at length): “The Gospels, like elsewhere in biblical literature, frequently use the words *blindness*, *deafness*, *eye* and *ear* in a figurative sense, conveying more than the activity of the body's sense organs. God is made known through words and deeds. To see and hear God's revelation fully requires not only physical sensation but spiritual sensitivity. It requires a personal response of understanding and commitment. Therefore, blindness and deafness can describe the inability to comprehend the spiritual truth inherent within material sights or words. This condition of hardness of heart may be due to religious or moral impairment, or due to God's intention. Salvation is frequently associated with sight in Jewish and Christian literature (Ex 14:13; 2 Chron 20:17; Ps 50:23; 91:16; 119:123; Is 40:5; 42:16–17; 59:11; 1QS 11:2–3; CD 20:34; *T. Gad.* 5:7; 2 Clem 1:6–7; 9:2). The OT prophets chasten the Hebrew people for having eyes and ears, and yet not seeing or hearing (Is 6:9–10; 43:8; Jer 5:21; Ezek 12:2). Responsibility for such spiritual blindness and deafness is sometimes said to be borne by God (Deut 29:4; Is 6:9–10) but, on the other hand, can be traced to the person's own obduracy. Yet God can overcome this hardness of heart (Is 29:18; 35:4–5; 42:6–7, 16; 61:1).”

source of life (1:4; 11:25), healing people from spiritual blindness (9:41; 12:40) and demonstrating the ability to grant people eternal existential possibilities (3:16; 20:30–31) within the family of the Father (1:12).

8.4.7 *In Conclusion*

In conclusion to this chapter, we can remark that, in John, the humiliating brokenness and death of Jesus on the cross is seen as a glorious (δόξα) event (3:14–15; 13:32) in light of the resurrection (2:18–22; 10:17–18). The resurrection is *the* culminating miracle-sign that shines life-creating, glorified ‘light’ back onto the Jesus-event and story. In light of the resurrection, the entire mission of Jesus ends in fulfilment. He conquered death and proved that he truly is the source of life. As a result, *He* is the one who is able to heal, repair and restore. After his resurrection, he can no longer merely be seen as an ancient healer, wonder-worker or prophet. It is now crystal clear that he is the Son of God and that his resurrection brought with it true, eternal healing and life (10:10; 20:30–31).

The healing of a broken relationship between God and man, together with its subsequent existential potentialities within God’s family, was not only meant for Israel, but for all the scattered children of God, that’s right, the entire (believing) world! (11:52). Jesus solved the crisis of the Universal Divine Narrative by restoring the broken relationship between God and his world. This was God’s cosmic plan (cf. *missio Dei*) (3:16; 20:30–31) and goal with the Son’s mission. Milgrom (1991:889) strikingly describes how healing or restoration leads to reconciliation with God:

As the celebrant moves from the realm of impurity outside the camp to, restored first to his community, then to his home, and finally to his sanctuary, he has passed from impurity to holiness, from death to life, is reinstated with his family, and reconciled with his God.

MILGROM 1991:889

Milgrom (1991:889) illustrates here the truth that sickness or brokenness, *death-impurities* as he calls it, are linked to impurity and social-religious separation. Healing or restoration, therefore, results in a crossing over from death to life and ultimately to reconciliation on vertical (God) and horizontal (neighbour) levels. This is exactly what happened in John. The world was caught up in ‘death’, ‘darkness’ and a sinful state of existence, removed from God, since they were children of the devil (cf. 8:44). With the death and resurrection of Jesus it became possible for the entire human race to be restored in their relationship with God by passing from death to life (cf. 5:24) and becoming children of God (1:12). The resurrection, in this way, became a theology, or rather, a symbol

of hope, confessing “the claim that conventional definitions of reality do not contain or define what God will yet do in Israel” (Brueggemann 1995:xvii). In a different context, Brueggemann’s description of God’s intervention in this world is even more striking: In the current context where we are contemplating over the meaning of the resurrection, Brueggemann’s words could’ve been used to argue that the resurrection illustrates something of the “coming into human experience of such impossibilities that break open every definition of reality and power. Thus the character of God contains for Israel, the undeniable basis for hope against every closed system” (Brueggemann 1995:177). The resurrection, as a symbol of healing, restoration and reconciliation, within the framework of a restorative hermeneutic of representation, gives us hope and creates room for new existential potentialities within the family of God (1:12).

8.5 Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to illustrate why the resurrection should be viewed as the culminating act of healing in John’s Gospel. In the process it was argued that an inseparable theological bond exists between the death and resurrection of Jesus. This is particularly clear in John 10:17–18. As a result, the death of Jesus should not be seen as a *σημείον* in and of itself, as Van Belle (2006) would have it. The death of Jesus becomes a *σημείον* *only* in light (or seen through the perspective) of the resurrection, which is *thé* culminating *σημείον* in John.

There was also reflection on the inquiry into why a theological bond between the death and resurrection of Jesus is necessary, especially against the background of the theme of healing. In response to this question, it was argued that the world is caught up in a faithless, sinful, deadly existence and is estranged from God, to the extent that they have become children of the devil (cf. 8:44). Spiritually speaking, mankind is not only spiritually dead (cf. 5:24), but also spiritually blind (9:41; 12:40). It can thus be argued that the world occupies a situation of disorientation, far from God. Nevertheless, God loves the world and sends his only Son (3:16). The Son’s mission has a specific purpose, i.e. to save people from their “lost-ness”, associated with spiritual blindness and death, and assimilate them into God’s family (1:12). Jesus is sent by God to bring eternal life complemented by its consequent existential potentialities within God’s family to the human race (20:30–31). In order to achieve this, Jesus must not only possess such life within himself (1:4), he also has to be able to give this life to mankind (3:16; 20:30–31; 5:21). Jesus illustrates his ability to create life through acts of healing. The restoration of Lazarus serves as the great undisputable sign in the Gospel that Jesus can give life, especially against the

background that Lazarus had already been dead for more than three days and had started to decay. In other words, Jesus illustrates his ability to create life in a context where even the possibility for life had irreversibly been lost. In 11:25, Jesus further reveals that he is the resurrection and life. However, in John 11 Jesus offers life in co-operation with God. The question then arises whether Jesus would be able to create life if and when he lost his own. When Jesus dies and ultimately raises from the dead, the eschatological era of the Spirit arrives and new existential possibilities are created (cf. 7:37–39). The resurrection is the culminating sign in John, which proves that Jesus truly is the sent Son of God and that he has the ability to grant life, since he demonstrated both his ability to lay down and take up his own life again (cf. 10:17–18), with the implication that he contains life within himself (1:4).

The relation between death and resurrection was further contemplated by drawing on those heuristic categories identified within the healing acts. The heuristic categories entail a repeated *situation of disorientation*, identified by *brokenness*, which can categorically be connected with *death*. During the *interaction of transformation*, the brokenness of the situation is *restored* by Jesus, who acts as the life-giving *transformation agent*. As σημεία, the healing conduct(s) of Jesus repeatedly illustrate that Jesus possesses the ability to offer life, life which *reorients* or *re-presents* the total reality and worldview of the day—not only for the individual who was healed, but particularly for the reader of the text. According to John, those who read, and come to believe, are also ‘healed,’ ‘restored’ and reconciled with God.

The resurrection, as a culminating act of healing, serves in the Gospel as *the* sign of Jesus’ true identity. The cross-event (crucifixion and resurrection) can, in other words, be viewed as an act of healing since it connects directly to the created possibility for faith in Jesus, the healing of spiritual blindness and the salvation out of a spiritual state of dark and deadly existence (cf. 5:24).

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Conclusion and Implications for Interpretation

A balanced exegetical and socio-scientific approach challenges our modern European-American approaches to healing occurrences in the ancient Mediterranean world. The approach that I have taken in this book shows that the supernaturalism versus naturalism debate leads to an impasse. There are valuable alternative social scientific and anthropological scholarship models that could (heuristically) help unlock the social implications of healing in the first century, with significant implications for today. By means of the approach I have taken, new analytical categories were identified that open up fresh perspectives. One such analytical category is to differentiate between two dimensions: the ‘*curing of a disease*’ and the ‘*healing of an illness*’ (following Pilch 2000).

European-American approaches most often interpret the healing narratives from a Western Biomedical point of view that focus on ‘the curing of a disease’. The medical anthropological approach helps the reader to distinguish between the ‘curing of a disease’ and the ‘healing of an illness’. The ‘healing of an illness’ entails much more than simply the ‘curing of some biological disease’. In group oriented societies, biological diseases/sicknesses also affect the socio-religious position of people within society. When the ancient ‘healing’ narratives are only interpreted through the lenses of the Western Biomedical paradigm focusing on the ‘curing of a disease’, the broader social-religious dimensions of the ‘sickness and healing’ dimensions are totally underplayed. These analytical categories (‘curing of disease’ versus ‘healing of illness’) lead to a new set of questions with which the exegete could approach the text, such as: what is this text implicitly saying about the loss of life potential and honour of the sick person?; In what way is Jesus as healer presented as restoring such a person’s honor?; What implicit critique is made against the social-religious system by means of the narration of the healing acts?; In what way are the healing acts, and its associative restorative dimensions presented as a desired Christian ethos of reaching out to marginalised and dishonoured people for whom there might not be a ‘curing of a disease’ but perhaps a ‘healing of an illness’? I have illustrated in this book that when the term ‘healing’ is understood more broadly, beyond the analytical framework of the ‘curing of a disease’, ‘healing’ could also be interpreted as the ‘restoration of honour’ or the ‘healing’ of broken relationships. John explicitly describes conversion as a spiritual restorative event and uses the Greek word for ‘healing’ to express that idea (cf. *ἰάσσομαι* in 12:40–41; cf. also Jn 9:40–41; cf. also Ja 5:16 *ἰαθῆτε*). From typical European and American (Western) approaches, this (conversion) would not

even have been recognized as something that would be deserving of the term 'healing'. However, John draws this connection explicitly, and more importantly also *implicitly*. The implication is significant. Although John does not call it 'healing' every time it happens, implicitly 'healing' takes place in John whenever someone comes to faith for instance. When Jesus in John is trying to convince someone to believe, he is in actuality leading them towards 'healing' or 'restoration' and 'reconciliation'. Therefore, I have illustrated that the Samaritan woman at the well was 'healed' or 'restored' on different levels. In the same way the lame man was not only 'cured from his disease' but also 'healed from his illness and brokenness'. I have argued that John paints a picture of Jesus transcending social boundaries and bringing God's restorative presence. This is the picture that John paints of Jesus as God's missional incarnational agent (see Kok 2010:168–193).

This book hopefully opened up fresh perspectives for interpreting the 'healing narratives' in John and the meaning for today. In Africa, with some of the highest occurrences of people with HIV and AIDS in the world, there might not yet be a 'cure' for the disease, but there might be a 'healing for the illness'. The 'healing of an illness' represents much more than the mere 'biological curing of a disease' as I have argued in the introductory preface and elsewhere in the book. It includes restoration across many different dimensions that got disrupted and distorted in the process of the illness. For an African I have argued, a disease leads to 'sickness'—which could be understood as an umbrella term that includes both 'disease' and 'illness' (following Pilch 2000). An 'illness' influences all dimensions of life, such as family, religion and relations with the spiritual world, etc. Distorted and disharmonious relations could in other words be understood as a 'sickness' or a form of 'brokenness' which is in need of 'healing' or 'restoration'. In other words, when someone becomes sick, he or she might have done something to have upset the ancestors in the spiritual world. The physical disease might be the result of a broken relationship between people (see Wilkens 2011:37).

Jenkins predicts that by 2050, 72% of all Christians will live in Africa, Asia and Latin America (Jenkins 2011: *ad loc*). The face of Christianity will literally change. In African Christianity of the future, healing and restoration will play an important role, especially in those developing countries that make up some of the poorest communities in the world and who are in desperate need of restoration and reconciliation on so many levels. In fact, it is already an important dimension. Wilkens (2011:1), as mentioned in the introductory preface of this book, observes that in Africa, with its rapid spread of Christianity, healing plays an important role and that "healing is amongst the most visible elements

of Christianity . . . [H]ealing has turned out to be one of the most attractive elements in its missionary outreach” (Wilkens 2011:1).

Thus, in my opinion, the theme of healing and restoration is very relevant for our current context, especially on the African continent. Elsewhere I (Kok 2012b:37) have stated that:

The dynamic relationship between the Church’s mission and ethics finds its springboard in a renewed understanding of the Church’s role as an agent of healing and restoration. In the future, scholars from Africa will have to face the challenge of reading the Bible in Africa, and take part in the transformation of the symbolic world of Africa’s understanding and handling of illnesses. Therefore, the pendulum will again shift to a fresh reading of the Gospels and hermeneutically applying the principles of scripture in an African context where illnesses like blindness are often still linked to sin and punishment.

KOK 2012B:37

In the last few years (circa 2010 onwards) the World Council of Churches have shifted their focus to the theme “together towards life”. Many books by leading missiologists and by international committees like the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization reflect the importance of Mission and Reconciliation.¹ We live in a time in which the Church is called upon to work towards creating a world of healing, restoration and reconciliation. This became evident *inter alia* during the April 2016 Rome Conference on peace led by the Catholic Church.² The Catholic Church wants to make an important historical turn in the direction of creating a world of peace which engages the tools and critical reflection towards healing, restoration and reconciliation on multiple levels; from violence to non-violence and from war to peace. The hope is that followers of Christ around the world will actively work against the militarization of societies and move away from blessing war, to a paradigm of blessing movements of peace.

This study intended to make a contribution to this movement from the perspective of the New Testament, in an effort to create a better understanding of ancient healing narratives; how its message plays a role in the lives of group

1 See <https://www.lausanne.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/06/LOP51_IG22.pdf> accessed on 02 May 2016.

2 <<http://www.commondreams.org/views/2016/04/20/rome-conference-nonviolence-turning-point-history>> accessed on 02 May 2016.

oriented people who face the reality of brokenness, poverty and oppression on a daily level; and the role Christians play as agents of healing and restoration. From a critical correlation perspective,³ the understanding of these narratives could facilitate a fresh way of looking at the healing narratives in the Bible, and inspire those who read the Bible in Africa to find new hope by reading these source documents and bringing about the healing and restoration it calls for. For that to happen, identity, mission and ethos/lifestyle should meet; and people should be taken up in the call of Jesus in John: “καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, καὶ γὰρ πέμπω ὑμᾶς” (Jn 20:21)—i.e., that believers are called to be missional incarnational agents of God’s life-giving presence of healing and restoration in a broken world.

3 The critical correlation method of Edward Schillebeeckx (and Paul Tillich) investigates both the past context, and the present context, and brings the two contexts in (critical) dialogue with one another.

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¹ Abbreviation LCL represents *Loeb Classical Library*.

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Addendum

Analysis of the Basic Structure of the Healing Narratives

In this section, an analysis is prepared based on the basic structure of the healing narratives, discussed in the detailed exegetical investigations of the relevant sections above.

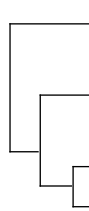
1 Analysis of the Structure of John 4:43–54¹

Division of the Text into Clusters and Colons

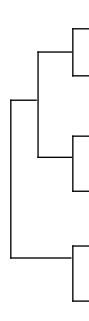
Cluster A: Jesus on his way to Galilee

1. 46 Ἦλθεν οὖν πάλιν εἰς τὴν Κανὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίας, ὅπου ἐποίησεν τὸ ὕδωρ οἶνον.

Cluster B: The request of the Royal official

- 
2. καὶ ἦν τις βασιλικὸς οὗ ὁ υἱὸς ἠσθένει ἐν Καφαρναούμ.
 3. 47 οὗτος ἀκούσας ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἔχει ἐκ τῆς Ἰουδαίας εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν ἀπῆλθεν πρὸς αὐτόν
 4. καὶ ἡρώτα ἵνα καταβῇ καὶ ἰάσῃται αὐτοῦ τὸν υἱόν,
 5. ἥμελλεν γὰρ ἀποθνήσκειν.

Cluster C: Jesus heals the son

- 
6. 48 εἶπεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς πρὸς αὐτόν,
 - i. Ἐὰν μὴ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἴδῃτε,
 - οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε.
 7. 49 λέγει πρὸς αὐτόν ὁ βασιλικός,
 - i. Κύριε,
 - ii. κατὰβηθι πρὶν ἀποθανεῖν τὸ παιδίον μου.
 8. 50 λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς,
 - i. Πορεύου,
 - ii. ὁ υἱός σου ζῇ.

1 The structural analysis of Hwang (2004:48–49) has been consulted in this section and that below.

Cluster D: The official and his household come to faith

9. ἐπίστευσεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῷ λόγῳ ὃν εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ
Ἰησοῦς
10. καὶ ἐπορεύετο.
11. 51 ἤδη δὲ αὐτοῦ καταβαίνοντος οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ ὑπὸ πῆλιν
αὐτῷ λέγοντες ὅτι
a. ὁ παῖς αὐτοῦ ζῇ. ←
12. 52 ἐπύθετο οὖν τὴν ὥραν παρ' αὐτῶν ἐν ἣ
κομψότερον ἔσχεν·
13. εἶπαν οὖν αὐτῷ ὅτι
a. Ἐχθὲς ὥραν ἐβδόμην ἀφῆκεν αὐτόν ὁ πυρετός.
14. 53 ἔγνων οὖν ὁ πατήρ ὅτι [ἐν] ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐν ἣ εἶπεν
αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς,
a. Ὁ υἱός σου ζῇ, ←
15. καὶ ἐπίστευσεν αὐτός καὶ ἡ οἰκία αὐτοῦ ὅλη. ←

Cluster E: Reference to the second miracle

16. 54 Τοῦτο [δὲ] πάλιν δεύτερον σημεῖον ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλθὼν ἐκ τῆς Ἰουδαίας εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν.

Discussion of the Analysis of the Structure of John 4:43–54.²

This section can be structured as follows (Hwang 2004:49–51):

TABLE 10 *Structure of John 4:43–54*

Cluster	Colon	Theme
A	1	Jesus on his way to Galilee
B	2–5	The request of the Royal official
C	6–8	Jesus heals the official's son
D	9–15	The official and his household come to faith
E	16	Reference to the second miracle in Cana

2 Drawn from Hwang (2004:48–49).

Cluster A (Colon 1): The word οὖν in colon 1 indicates the transition from one section to the next (Newman en Nida 1980:134). This colon signals Jesus' movement in a northerly direction, towards Galilee. The theme is thus called: *Jesus on his way to Galilee*.

Cluster B (Colons 2–5): This section can be divided/separated from the previous due to the change of characters at the scene. In colon 2 the royal official is introduced, and in colon 3 the temporal and spatial setting is indicated. Colon 4 is about the official's request (ἡρώτα) and colon 5 provides the motivation/reason for the request (γὰρ ἀποθνήσκειν). The inter-relational semantics of the text are as follows: Colon 2 introduces the successive colon with an introduction of the royal official. Colon 3 functions as a subordinate qualifying relationship to (scene order and time) colon 4, is the result of colon 5, and represents a clear logical pattern. The main focus of the section revolves around the request from the government official and the reality of the crisis surrounding the illness and impending death of his son.

Cluster C (Colon(s) 6–8): Colon 6 is distinguished from colon 5, based on the shift in focus that occurs in colon 6. In colon 6 Jesus is presented as reacting to the request from the official (colon 4). In these colons the main verb (λέγω) stimulates a reciprocal dialogue around the healing event.

Cluster D (Colon(s) 9–15): This section is distinguished from the previous because of the change of dialogue between Jesus and the official, which at this point, changes to a dialogue between the official and his servants (cf. Also See the change from *Praes. Ind. Act.* [λέγει] to *Aor. Ind. Act.* [ἐπίστευσεν] in 4:50). This section could be divided into three parts: Jn 3:10–12; 13–15 and 16. In the first section (colons 10–12), three verbs occur in the third person singular (ἐπίστευσεν; ἐπορεύετο;³ ὑπήντησαν⁴). Colons 13–15 have different structural markers (οὖν ἐν ὥρᾳ) while colon 15 forms an *inclusio* with colon 9—both revolve around the faith (ἐπίστευσεν)⁵ of the royal official (Hwang 2004:50).

Colons 9 to 11 is derived from the subsequent actions related to the government official's faith in the words of Jesus and the official's return to Canaan on the way to his son. Colon 12 contains the government official's question—colon 13, the servants' response to the question, and colon 14 presents the result of colons 12 and 13. The central point here is related to the *time* when the healing took place (cf. οὖν and ὥρᾳ). Colon 15 is the result of the healing, while the recurrence of colon 9 indicates the progressive development of the government official's belief, that ultimately resulted in the 'conversion' of his whole family (ἐπίστευσεν αὐτὸς καὶ ἡ οἰκία αὐτοῦ ὅλη). The theme of this section is thus summarised as: *The government official and his household came to faith*.

Cluster E (Colon 16): The word δὲ distinguishes this section from the previous. This colon deals with Jesus' movement to Galilee, and thus signifies a change of scene. The

3 Verb: ἐπορεύετο: Imperfect, Indicative, Middle, 3rd person singular of πορεύομαι.

4 Verb: ὑπήντησαν: Aorist, Indicative, Active, 3rd person singular of ὑπαντάω.

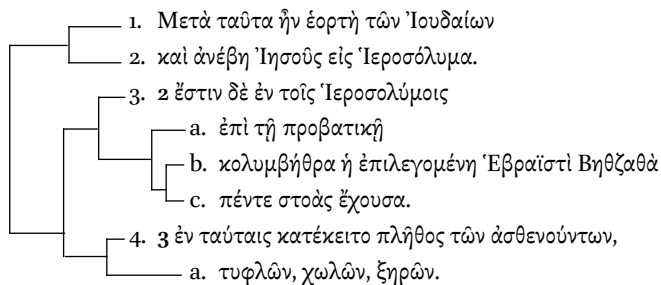
5 Verb: ἐπίστευσεν: Aorist, Indicative, Active, 3rd person singular of πιστεύω.

reference to the second miracle sign is prominently evident and therefore this section is described as: *Reference to the second miracle in Galilee.*

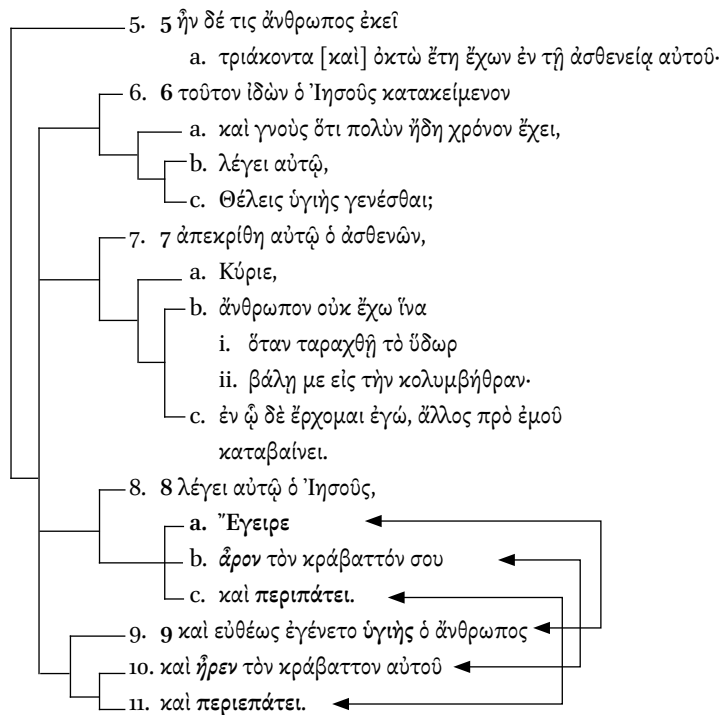
2 Analysis of the Structure of John 5:1–18

Division of the text into Clusters and Colons

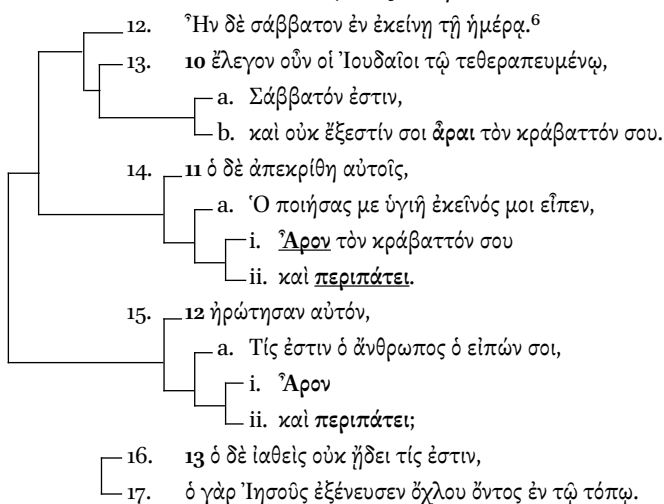
Cluster A: Colons 1–4 Jesus and the Sick



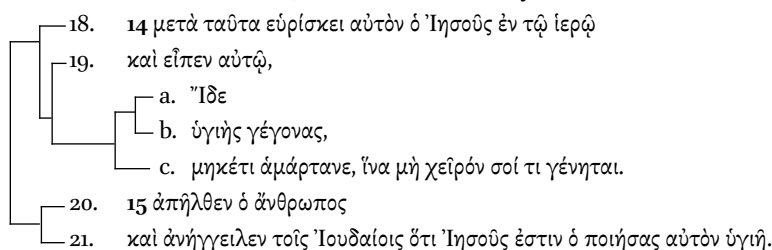
Cluster B: Colon 5–11 Jesus heals the lame man



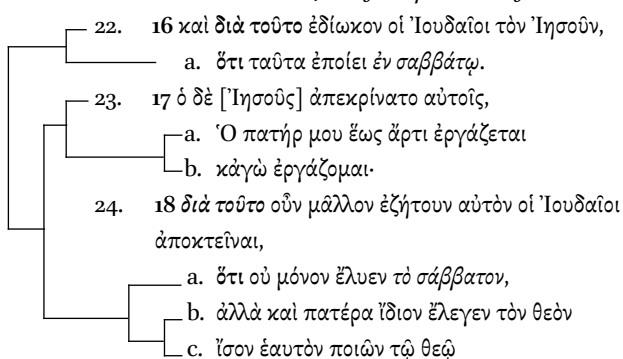
Cluster C: Colons 12–17 The Jews question the man



Cluster D: Colons 18–21 Jesus warns, man betrays



Cluster E: Colons 22–24 The Jews plot to kill Jesus



6 According to Carson (1991:245) this insertion is a good example of John's use of irony. What John does here, is to narrate the healing miracle, and then only after the healing act was performed, he sketches an ironic situation that builds up tension (Köstenberger 2004:181). Cf. also the Synoptic account(s) of Jesus' healing on the Sabbath (see Mk 1:21–28; Mt 8:14–15; 12:9–14; Lk 13:10–17; 14:1–6).

Summary

According to the analysis of the structure of the text, the following sections and phrases are identified and structured as follows (Hwang 2004:76):

TABLE 11 *Division of John 5:1–18*

Cluster	Colon	Theme
A (1)	1–4	Jesus and the Sick
B (2)	5–11	Jesus heals the lame man
C (1)	12–17	The Jews question the man
D (2)	18–21	Jesus warns, man betrays
E (3)	22–24	The Jews plot to kill Jesus

This passage (5:1–18) can be divided into two parts:

- Part A–B (Jn 5:1–9a)⁷
- Part C–E (Jn 5:9b–18)

The first part (5:1–9a) deals with the healing itself. The narrator takes the reader from the general situation/scene of the sick and then focuses on a man who had been sick for 38 years. The second section (5:9b–18) leads to a conflict narrative in which the narrator presents the hostile attitude of the Jews toward Jesus, with reference to the keeping/breaking of the Sabbath. In this section the intrigue around the Jewish plot to kill Jesus is further developed.⁸ John 5:19–47 deals with Jesus' response to the opposition from the Jews.⁹ John 5:19–30 revolves around the truth that Jesus is the giver of life, and also able to judge, a power bestowed upon him by the Father (Jn 5:17).¹⁰ The discourse that follows in 5:19–30 is very important with regard to the construction of the entire Gospel message in John—i.e., the fact that Jesus declares that he is only able to do what the Father reveals to him (Jn 5:19), and that he does nothing of his own accord.¹¹ Just as the Father has Life in Himself, likewise the Son also has Life, and is able to bestow/grant Life (Jn 5:21; 26). Structurally speaking the healing narrative

7 See Beasley-Murray (1987:71), Witherington (1995:134) and Ridderbos (1992:184) for discussions about the structuring of this pericope.

8 Carson (1991:247).

9 See Carson (1991:246). He structures 5:16–47 as a unit.

10 Beasley-Murray (1987:72).

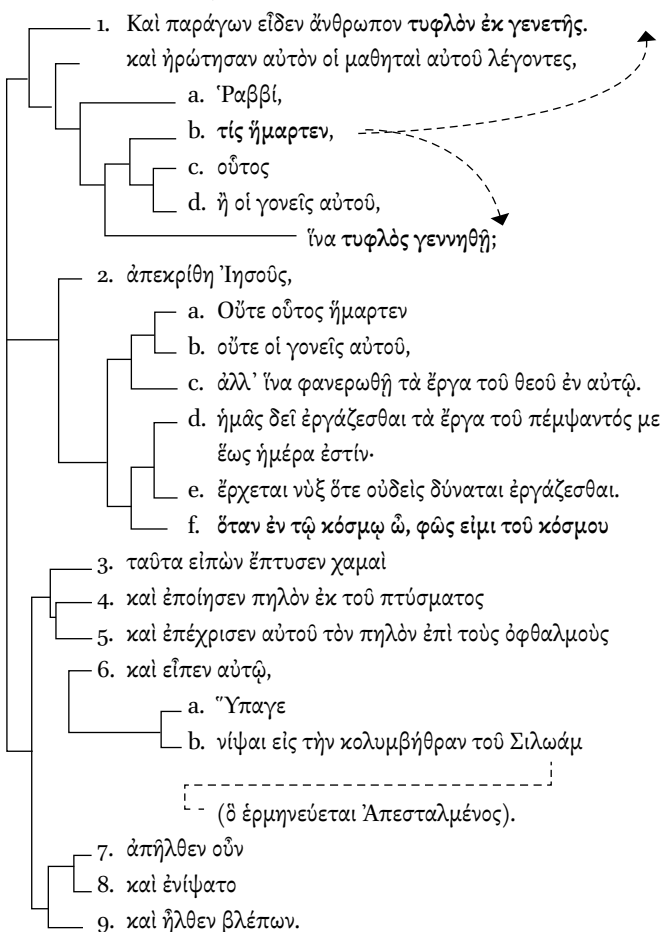
11 Ridderbos (1997:191).

(5:1–18) should be read together with John 5:19–30. In this particular section we find a discourse where Jesus' pronouncement revolves around life and judgment (cf. 5:21; 24–27; 28–29).¹² For this very reason, this part should also be exegetically analysed, since it is closely related to the *meaning* of the healing act in John.

3 Analysis of the Structure of John 9:1–41

*Division of the Text Into Clusters and Colons*¹³

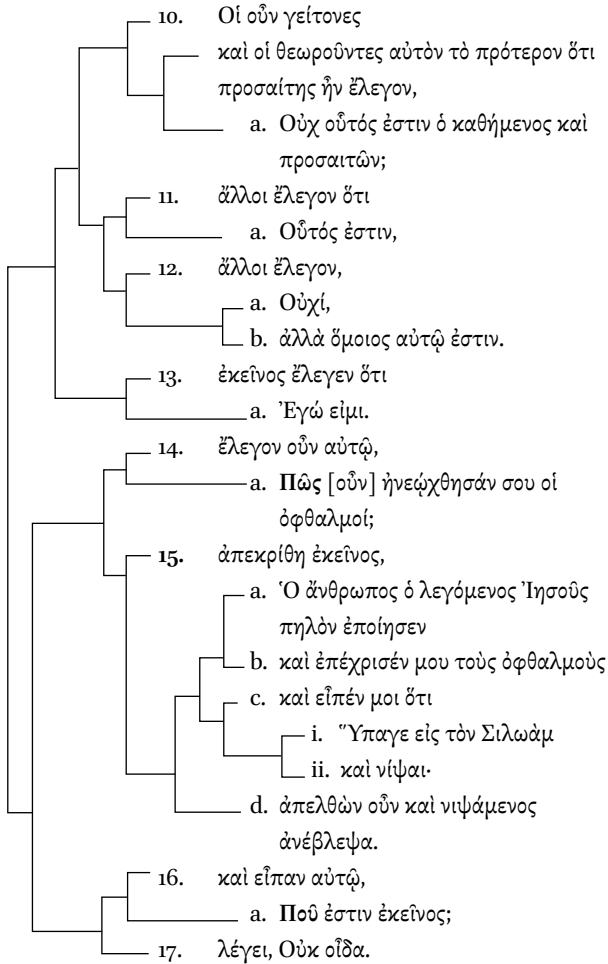
Cluster A: Colons 1–9 Jesus heals the blind man



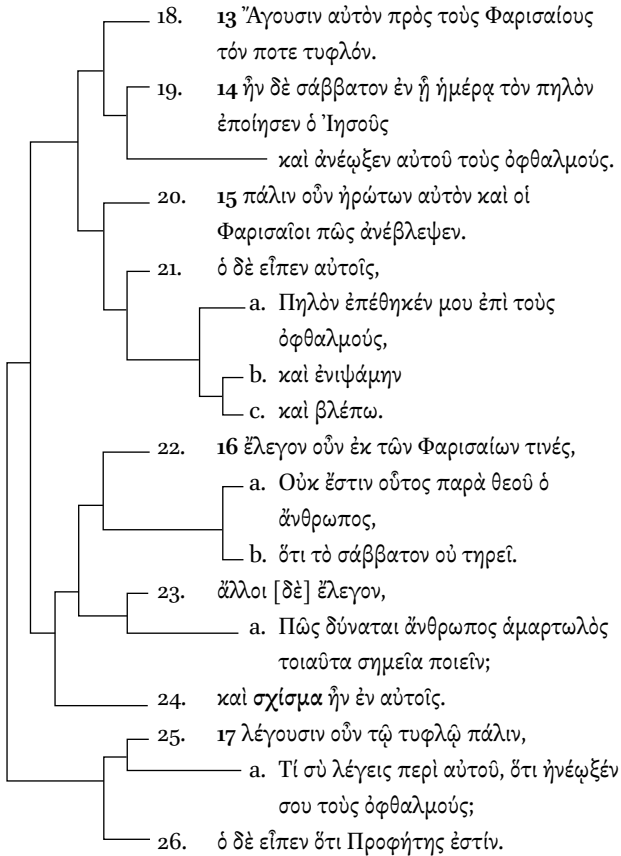
¹² Cf. Moloney (1998:176).

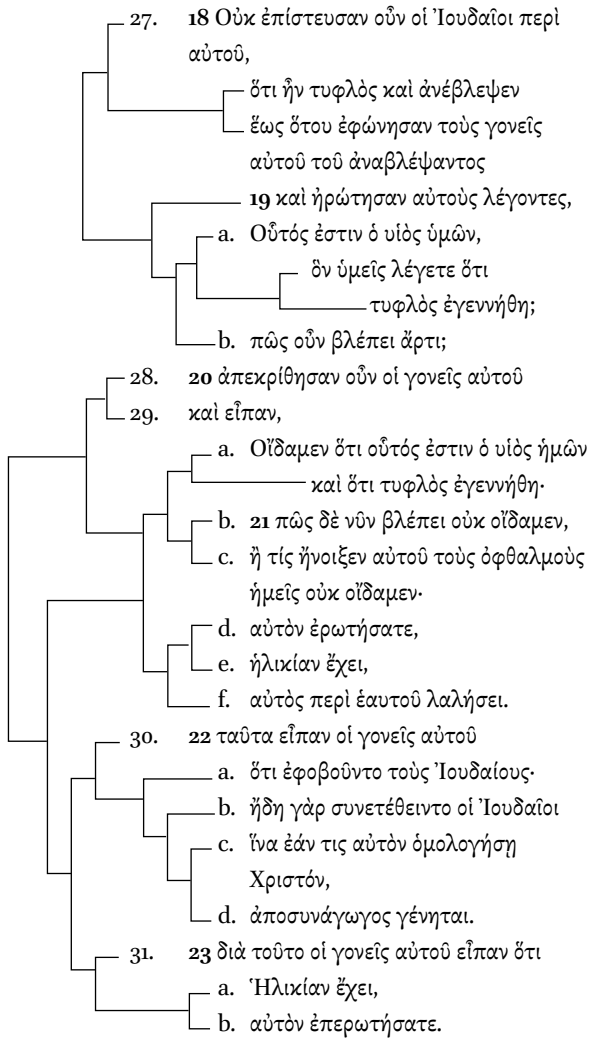
¹³ Insights drawn from Hwang (2004).

Cluster B: Colons 10–17 The questioning of the blind man by his neighbours

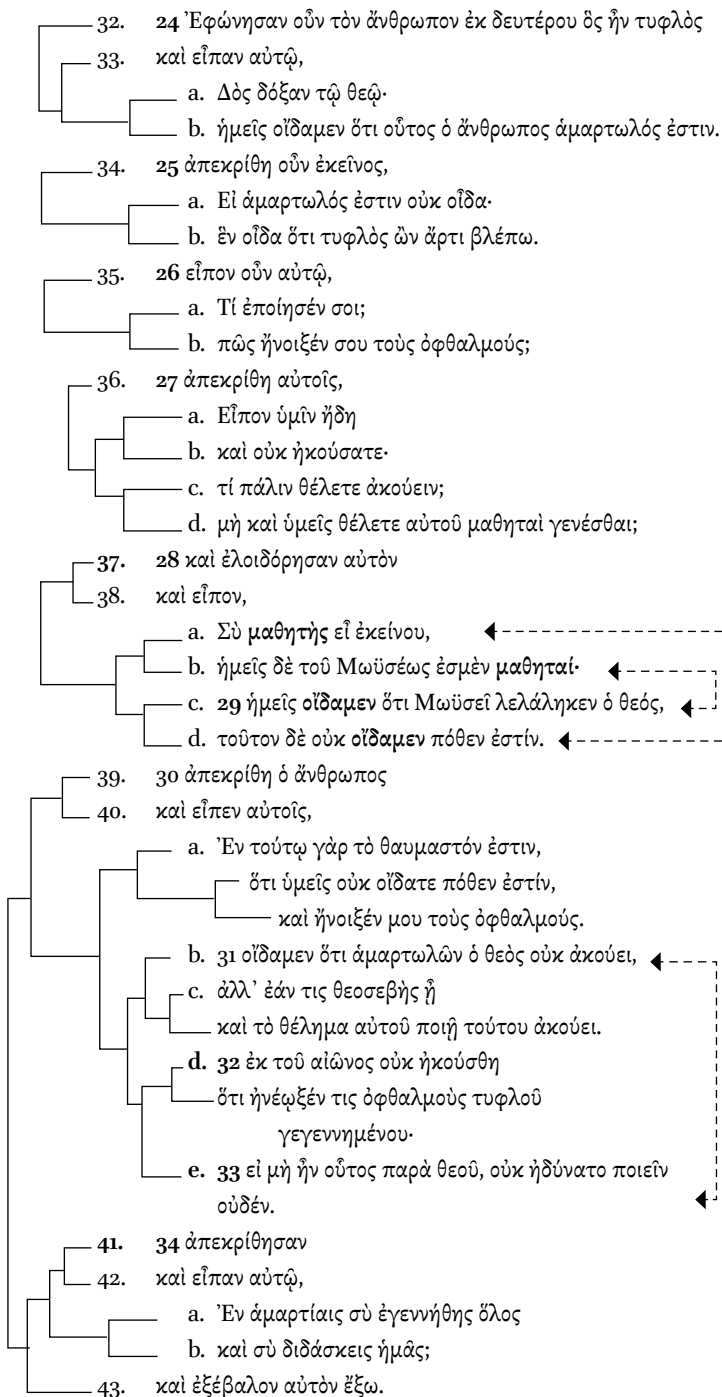


Cluster C: Colons 18–26 The interrogation of the blind man by the Pharisees

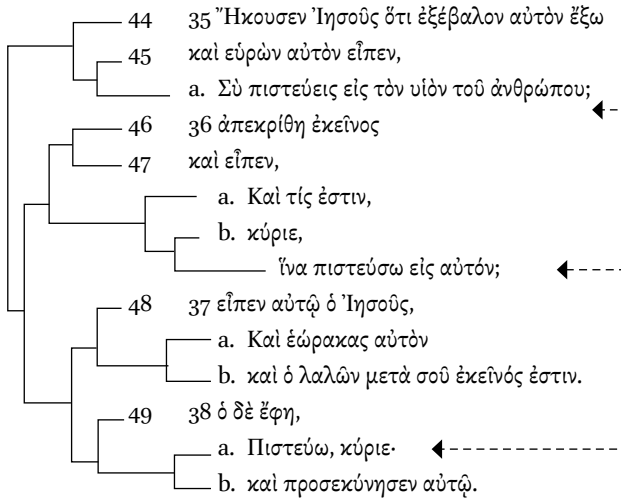


Cluster D: Colons 27–31 The interrogation of the blind man's parents

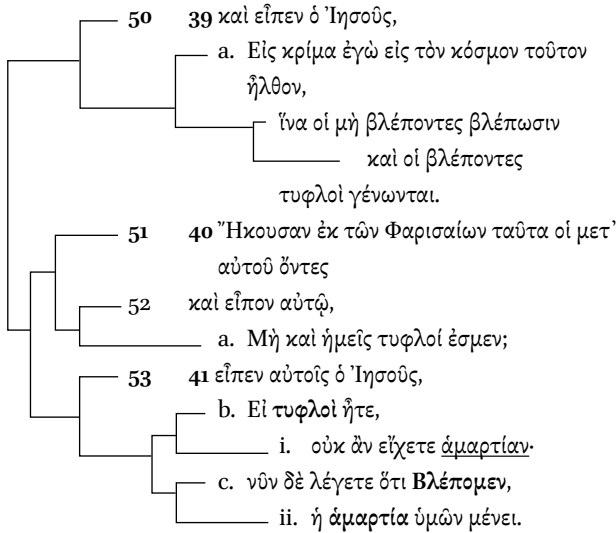
Cluster E: More interrogation by the Pharisees



Cluster F: Colons 44–49 The dialogue between Jesus and the blind man: Jesus guides the blind man towards faith and confession



Cluster G: Colons 50–53 Sequel: Jesus declares the purpose of his mission—he came to let the (spiritually) blind see



Summary of the analysis of the structure of the text

This pericope consists of seven scenes:¹⁴

1. The *healing wonder* is narrated in cluster A (vv. 1–7);
2. Thereafter *four interrogation scenes* occur in cluster B–E (vv. 8–34):
 - a. *Interrogation by the neighbours* (vv. 8–12)
 - b. *Interrogation by the Pharisees* (vv. 13–17)
 - c. *Interrogation of the blind man's parents* by the Pharisees (vv. 18–23)
 - d. Further *interrogation of the man* by the Pharisees (vv. 24–34)
3. Followed by two *discussions* (cluster F–G [vv. 35–41]),
 - a. Between Jesus and the blind man (vv. 35–38)
 - b. Between Jesus and the Jews (vv. 39–41)

Kysar (1986:148) rightly points out that this particular text is a well-developed drama¹⁵ consisting of seven scenes in which the author narrates a healing story and masterfully weaves a symbolic meaning into the drama.

Summary of the literary setting

- Right at the beginning of the narration, the narrator sketches the *spatial setting* (Siloam) and the *occasional setting* (Sabbath).¹⁶
- It is unlikely that it takes place directly after Jesus' departure from the temple in 8:59 (Beasley-Murray 1987:153).
- The *historical setting* in which the events take place, refers to the time shortly after the feast of Tabernacles.¹⁷
- The *contemporary setting* of the scene is sketched in 9:22 where the Jews have agreed to expel from the synagogue those who confess Jesus as the Messiah.

14 Insights drawn from Hwang (2004). See Beasley-Murray (1987:152); Witherington (1995:134); Malina en Rohrbaugh (1998:169).

15 See Beasley-Murray (1987:153); Wengst (2000:350–351).

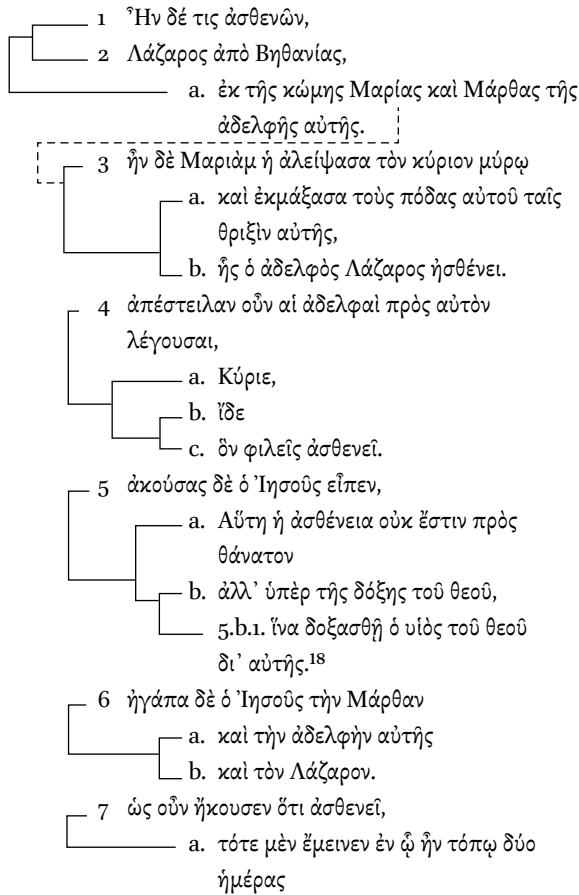
16 See Beasley-Murray (1987:153–154).

17 Carson (1991:359): "Thematically, this chapter is tied to the Feast of Tabernacles (ch. 8) through the explicit reference to Jesus as the light of the world (9:5; cf. 8:12)". Cf. Kysar (1986:148).

4 Analysis of the Structure of John 11:1–44

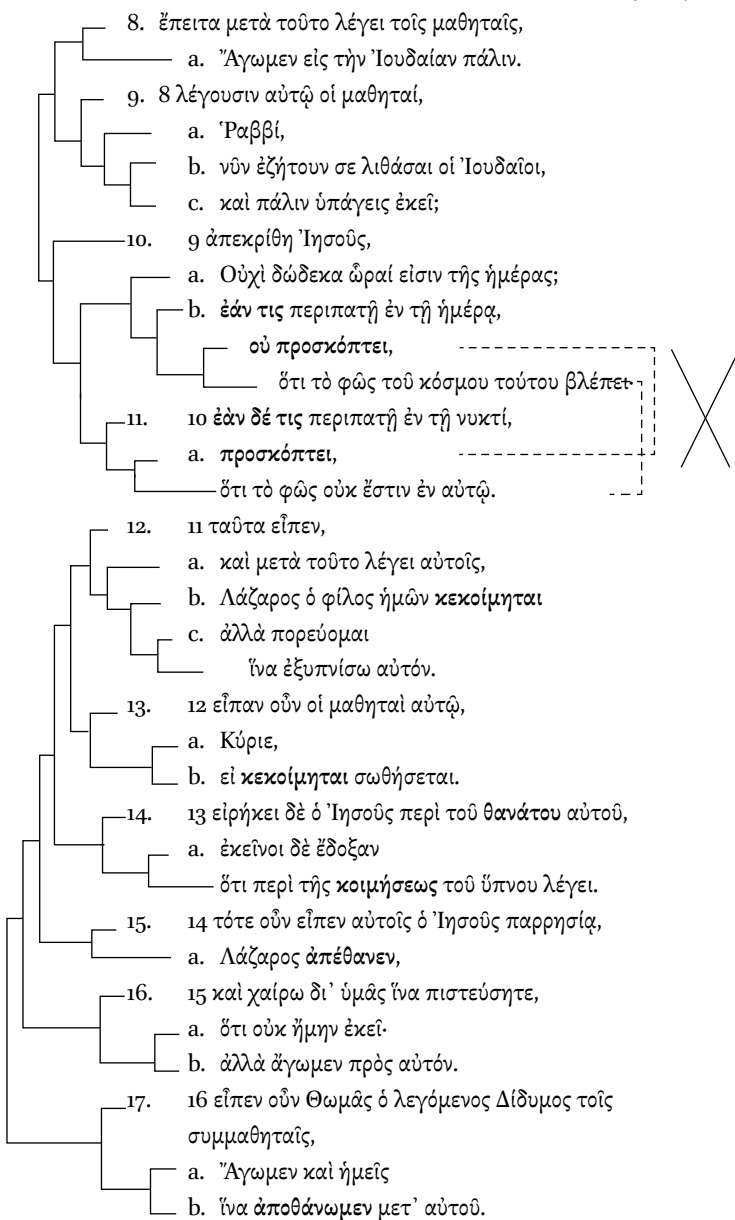
Division of the text into clusters and colons

Cluster A: Colons 1–7 News about the sickness of Lazarus (11:1–6)

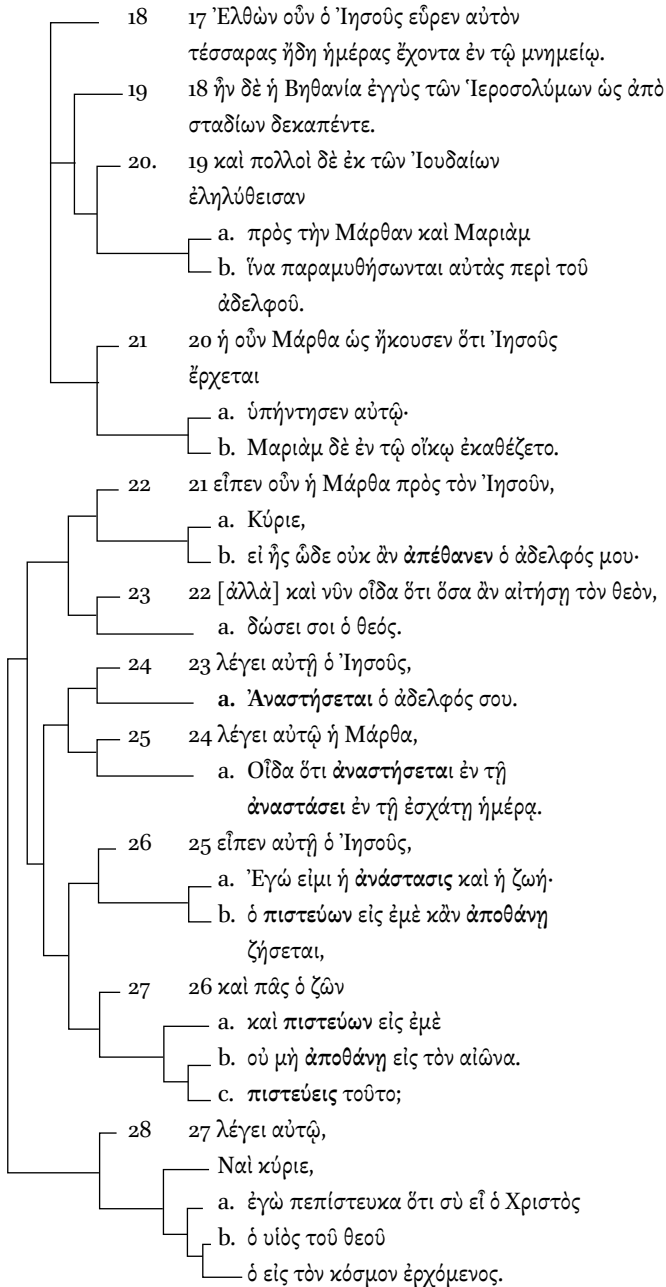


18 See the parallel with Jn 9:3 where the crisis of the sickness is linked to the glory of God (Köstenberger 2004:327).

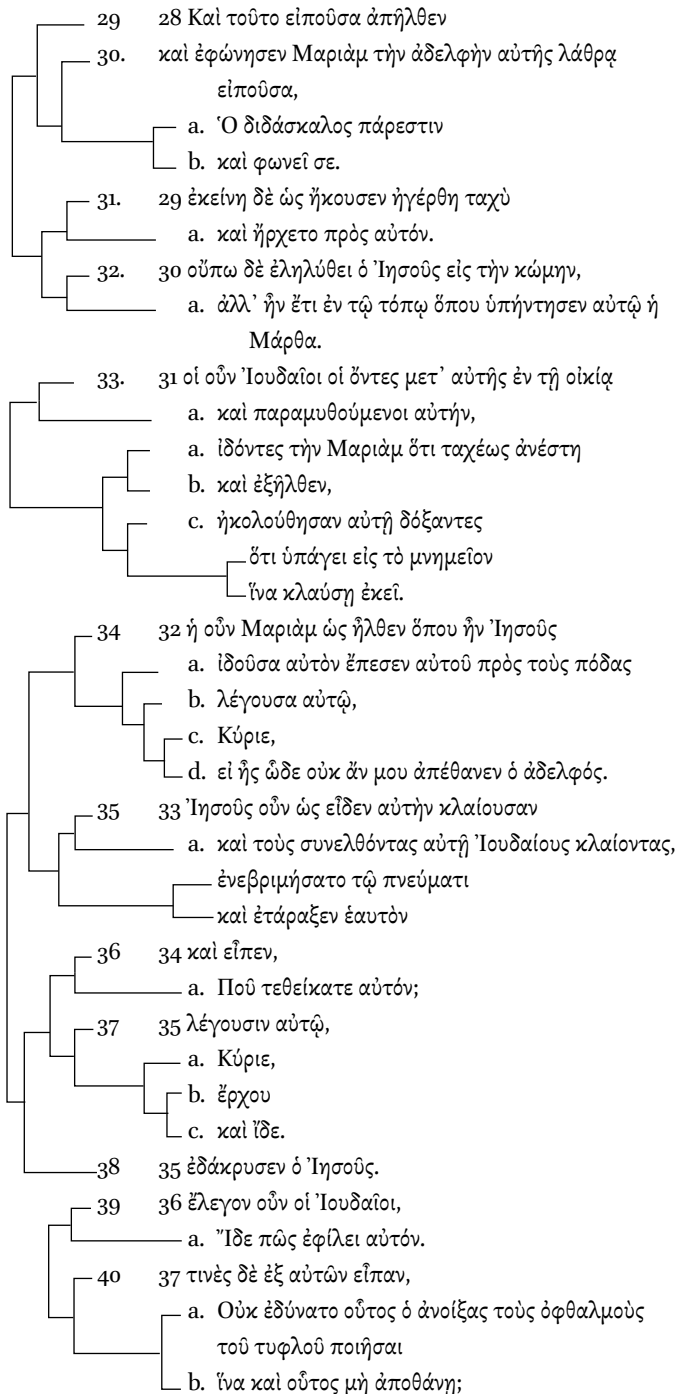
Cluster B: Colons 8–17 The discussion between Jesus and his disciples (11:7–16)



Cluster C: Colons 18–28 The discussion between Jesus and Martha—Jesus is the resurrection and life (11:17–27)



Cluster D: Colons 29–40 The discussion between Jesus and Mary (11:28–37)



Cluster E: Colons 41–50 The resurrection of Lazarus (11:38–44)

- 41 38 Ἰησοῦς οὖν πάλιν ἐμβριμώμενος ἐν ἑαυτῷ
a. ἔρχεται εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον·
42 ἦν δὲ σπῆλαιον
43 καὶ λίθος ἐπέκειτο ἐπ' αὐτῷ.
44 39 λέγει ὁ Ἰησοῦς,
a. Ἄρατε τὸν λίθον.
45 λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ ἀδελφὴ τοῦ τετελευτηκότος
Μάρθα,
a. Κύριε,
b. ἤδη ὄζει,
c. τεταρταῖος γὰρ ἐστίν.
46 40 λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς,
a. Οὐκ εἶπόν σοι ὅτι
b. ἐάν πιστεύσῃς ὅψῃ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ
θεοῦ;
47 41 ἦραν οὖν τὸν λίθον.
ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἦρεν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἄνω
a. καὶ εἶπεν,
b. Πάτερ,
c. εὐχαριστῶ σοι ὅτι ἤκουσάς μου.
48 42 ἐγὼ δὲ ᾔδειν ὅτι πάντοτε μου ἀκούεις,
ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸν ὄχλον τὸν περιεστώτα
εἶπον,
a. ἵνα πιστεύσωσιν
b. ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας.
49 43 καὶ αὐτὰ εἰπὼν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ
ἐκραύγασεν,
a. Λάζαρε,
b. δεῦρο ἔξω.
50 44 ἐξῆλθεν ὁ τεθνηκὼς
a. δεδεμένος τοὺς πόδας καὶ τὰς χεῖρας
κειρίαις
b. καὶ ἡ ὄψις αὐτοῦ σουδαρίῳ
περιεδέδετο.
a. λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς,
b. Λύσατε αὐτὸν
c. καὶ ἄφετε αὐτὸν ὑπάγειν.

Summary

According to the analysis of the text, the relation between the following sections is as follows:

TABLE 12 *Division of John 11:1–44*

Cluster	Colon	Theme
A	1–7 (vv. 1–6)	The news regarding the sickness of Lazarus
B	8–17 (vv. 7–16)	The discussion between Jesus and the disciples
C	18–28 (vv. 17–27)	The discussion between Jesus and Martha
D	29–40 (vv. 28–37)	The discussion between Jesus and Mary
E	41–50 (vv. 38–44)	The resurrection of Lazarus

It is clear that the pericope consists of five structured scenes.¹⁹ Cluster A (colons 1–7) outlines the introduction, which is followed by three discussions (clusters B–D; colons 8–17; 18–27; 28–42) between Jesus and the other characters in the narrative (the disciples, Martha and Mary). The miracle takes place only in the last part/section (cluster E; colons 43–55). The unique nature of the narrative's composition shows that the author developed his theological message using the conversations, and then brought his message to a culminating point by means of the healing miracle (contra Bultmann 1971:409).²⁰

¹⁹ For these insights I have consulted Hwang (2004).

²⁰ Bultmann (1971:409) does not consider the Lazarus story as a culminating healing act. See also Salier (2004:129) and others who argue that the Lazarus story could indeed be viewed as a culminating healing act in John, at least with reference to the public ministry of Jesus in the first 12 chapters of John's Gospel.

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